

Fifth Estate

Spring 2015

INSIDE:

ANARCHY IN KURDISTAN

Bill Weinberg

PROTESTER'S CELL PHONE GUIDE

Electronic Freedom Foundation

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ANTI MARX

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from the 19th Century
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LETTERS

Our readers respond

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All formats accepted including typescript & handwritten; letters may be edited for length

Prostitution Comment I

Aaron Lakoff's article "Solidarity or Abolition? Anarchists & Sex Work" (see FE Spring/Summer, 2014) was a valuable contribution to the discussion of the topic.

I agree with Lakoff's conclusion that, "An anarchist approach to sex work is one that supports workers who want to get out of the industry, while at the same time supporting people who want to stay and fight for better conditions."

Several of our anarchist predecessors adopted such a position, including both Emma Goldman and some of the Spanish anarchist women of *Mujeres Libres* of the 1930s. These anarchists were impressed with the findings of Freud and other psychologists of their time, which led them to the conclusion that sex work involves psychological and social factors that impact individuals and society well beyond the kind of alienation that results from other forms of wage labor.

In various speeches, articles and books, Emma Goldman asserted that prostitution is more than simply one form of wage work. For her, the trade is the product of the impoverishment women suffer under capitalism combined with a sexually exploitative and repressive society.

She felt that psychological and social/cultural factors are as important as economic factors in gaining a full understanding of the various aspects of sexual relations and sex work. Although Goldman had sympathy for wives and prostitutes, she felt that marriage and prostitution were bad for both women and men, as well as for the creative impulses that lead to social revolution.

With this in mind, she advocated sex education, access to birth control, and abandoning repressive morality, while fighting for the abolition of wage slavery. Some anarchists I know feel that Goldman romanticized the power of authentic sexual intimacy and love, and



overemphasized their importance for human liberation and revolution.

In order to decide for oneself, it is best to read some of Goldman's articles and books directly rather than accept anyone else's interpretation of what she says. Her writings can be found in bookstores, libraries and on the internet, especially in the Anarchist Library at theanarchistlibrary.org/authors/emma-goldman where there are currently more than 40 articles and books available.

One strong tendency in the 1930s *Mujeres Libres* group viewed prostitution as "the greatest of slaveries." They felt that the best solidarity they could offer prostitutes was to establish a network of centers offering support to those working as prostitutes and encouraging them to leave the sex industry and join the revolutionary movement.

Until quitting became a realistic option, others in *Mujeres Libres* and other women's organizations of the time supported prostitutes' unions to struggle against their exploitation. Due to conditions created by the civil war and the thwarted aspects of the revolution of 1936 through 1939, neither approach could be successfully put into effect.

Those wanting to know more about this should check out *Free Women of Spain*, Martha Ackelsburg's

study of *Mujeres Libres* during the Spanish Revolution, based on personal interviews along with the writings in their journals of the time. A free PDF version of the book is available from Libcom.org at libcom.org/library/free-women-spain-anarchism-struggle-emancipation-women-martha-ackelsburg. Also available in print from AK Press. (Also see "Lessons from Spain's *Mujeres Libres*" by Martha Ackelsburg, *Fifth Estate* #372, Spring 2006, available in our Web archives.)

Becoming more familiar with our anarchist predecessors' ideas and attempts at solidarity with prostitutes might possibly help us come up with some new and more effective approaches.

Marie Louise
Tacoma, Wash.

Prostitution Comment II

After reading Aaron Lakoff's and Thaddeus Blanchett (See "On the Sale of Bodies: The View from Rio de Janeiro," FE, Fall/Winter 2014) views on prostitution, I am at loss to comment on such meager pickings.

A selective view of a controversy will always serve whoever does the selecting and this is what we got: semantic exercises setting up moralists against sex workers, as if no morality was involved and no prostituted women actively support the Nordic model.

The writers rendered invisible almost all the women fighting their exploiters, even though they have been the main stakeholders in the massive sea-change shifting criminalization away from the prostituted class and onto profiteers. Anarcha-feminist writers such as Kajsa Ekis Ekman, Helene Hernandez, and Elisabeth Claude were entirely omitted, along with the tremendous anti-

Continued on Page 46

Anti-Marx



This issue begins our 50th year of publishing a radical journal with a demolition of the theories of Marx.

Plans are currently under discussion for a celebration in Detroit later in the year. We'll keep you informed in subsequent issues and on our social media as a program develops and a date is set.

We should all be proud to have kept this magazine going with its unique voice of revolution when so many others have unfortunately fallen by the wayside. And, the "we" here includes not just the people who have produced it over the past half century, but those of you who are readers and supporters as well.

The future for this publication seems as bright as it has in a long time as movements of resistance and contestation continue to grow. And, our circulation expands even though print media is routinely pronounced as a curio from another era.

From its origins in 1965, the staff has always practiced engaged journalism, and will continue to be part of a grand refusal of submission, and at the same time hold up a vision of a different world not dominated by the state and capital.

Thanks to all who have made this anniversary possible.

Fifth Estate

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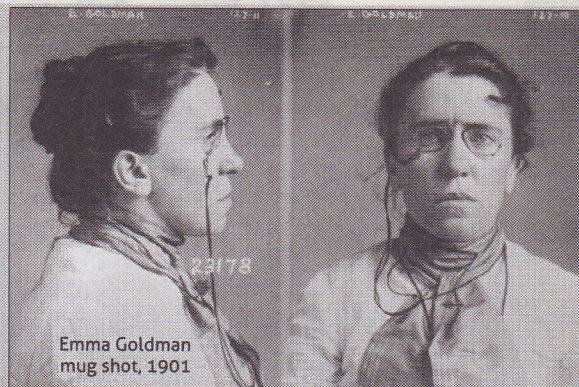
Anarcho-shorts & other Tales of the Planet

A VALUABLE ANARCHIST HISTORY RESOURCE, The Emma Goldman Papers archive, is being defunded by University of California, Berkeley, and will have to close if alternative funding can't be found soon. The 34-year-old archive is currently the most

comprehensive, organized collection of Goldman-related materials in the world.

The EGP project has published selected documents in several books. It has been planning to digitize the approximately 40,000 items it holds, making them available to interested researchers worldwide. However, in October, the university administration informed the project's editor and director, Candace Falk, that it would no longer support the project. Other sources of funding have also been dwindling.

If you can help, contact: The Emma Goldman Papers, University of California, Berkeley, 2241 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94720-6030; cfalk@berkeley.edu.



OCTOBER BROUGHT THE SAD NEWS from Greece that Loukanikos, the riot dog who faced down Greek police during the height of the eurozone crisis, had died. According to London's *Guardian* newspaper, Greek media reported that Loukanikos (Greek for sausage) passed away peacefully, having retired from

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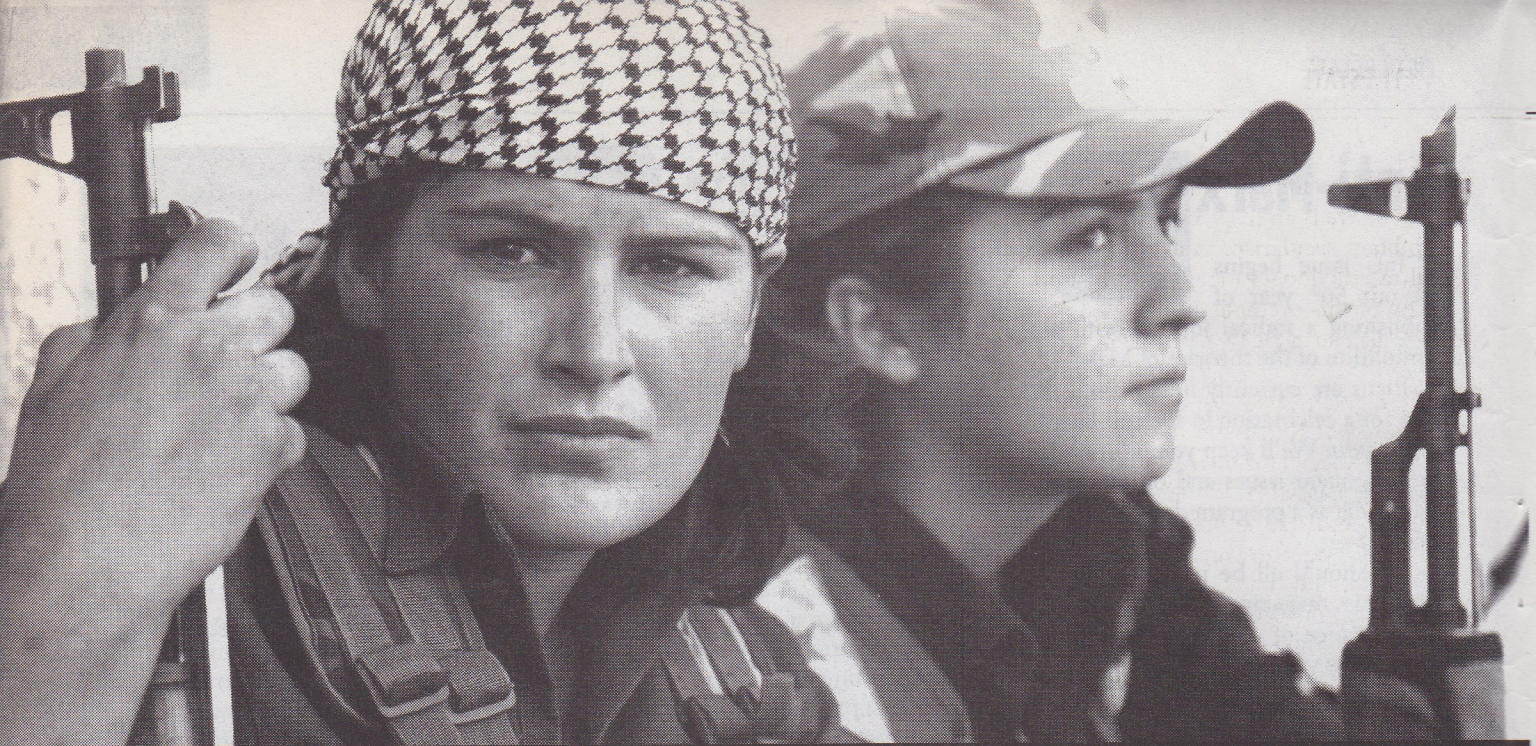
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Cover design: Quincy B. Thorne



SYRIA'S KURDISH REVOLUTION

The Anarchist Element & the Challenge of Solidarity

BILL WEINBERG

The north Syrian town of Kobani has been under siege since mid-September by forces of the self-proclaimed Islamic State, popularly known as ISIS. Early in the siege, world leaders spoke as if they expected it to fall.

The US took its bombing campaign against ISIS to Syria, but targeted the jihadists' *de facto* capital, Raqqa, not the ISIS forces closing the ring on Kobani. But the vastly outgunned and outnumbered Kurdish militia defending Kobani began to turn the tide, while issuing desperate appeals for aid from the outside world.

The defenders and aggressors at Kobani are a study in extreme contrasts. ISIS is charged with committing massive war crimes and crimes against humanity in areas under its control—most notoriously, the massacres and enslavement of the Yazidi minority in northern Iraq. Rights for women have been utterly repealed, and a trade in sexual slavery (hideously called “marriage”) established.

Kobani lies within the autonomous Kurdish zone in northern Syria (now partially overrun by ISIS), which has issued a constitution guaranteeing equal rights for women in all spheres of life—domestic, civic, labor. An experiment in direct democracy has been launched, with power devolving to neighborhood and village assemblies, where seats revolve and women have a 40 percent quota. These assemblies also send empowered representatives to canton assemblies. A par-

allel Women's Assembly, on the same model, has veto power over the canton assemblies.

Neighborhoods and localities also have peace and justice committees which resolve conflicts through mediation, and are to eventually replace the formal judicial system inherited from the Syrian state.

This system came to power when the Syrian state lost control of the north in 2012. The new constitution covers the three Kurdish-majority self-governing cantons, Afrin, Jazira and Kobani, a region collectively known as Rojava. While the struggle at Kobani has made world headlines, the media have not noted the democratic experiment in Rojava, much less its anarchist element.

The Rojava autonomous zone is largely led by the Democratic Union Party (PYD), although other parties are represented in the canton governments. The PYD has followed a trajectory from Kurdish nationalism to a kind of anarcho-municipalism. Other ethnicities, Arabs, Assyrian Christians, are also represented in the Rojava cantons.

The overall coalition of the PYD and its allies is the Movement for a Democratic Society (Tevdem). The territory is defended by a militia network, the People's Protection Units (YPG) and Women's Protection Units (YPJ). While there are women commanders of mixed-gender units in the YPG, the YPJ exists as an all-woman fighting force.

The three pillars of the Rojava autonomous zone are

named as feminism, confederalism, and ecology.

Rojava is an inspiring example of popular democracy and militant secularism in a region under attack from the most ultra-reactionary manifestation of political Islam. The evolution of this example must be seen in the context of the long Kurdish struggle for self-rule in their homeland.

Rojava means west in Kurdish, and is the southwestern arm of Kurdistan, the homeland of the Kurdish people. When the victorious Allies redrew the boundaries of the Middle East after World War I, the Kurds were left off the map. Kurdistan is now divided between four nation-states: Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran—all historically hostile to Kurdish autonomy and its very identity.

Since the aftermath of 1991 U.S. Operation Desert Storm, the Kurds in Iraq have had their own autonomous zone, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

This has become the most stable, prosperous and secular part of Iraq, largely spared the chaos in the rest of the country until the ISIS advance into KRG territory in June. The KRG has grown increasingly close to the US and the West. It controls its oilfields and built its own pipeline to export crude oil to Turkey.

Saddam Hussein's counterinsurgency campaigns against the Kurds in the 1980s were genocidal, repeatedly using chemical weapons against civilian populations, most famously at Halabja in 1988. NATO ally Turkey gave Saddam a good run for his money in the same period. The war against the guerillas of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in eastern Turkey cost some 30,000 lives in the 1980s and '90s. The PKK, founded in 1984, initially had a sort of Maoist take on Kurdish nationalism, and a personality cult around its leader, Abdullah Ocalan.

The PKK declared a ceasefire after Ocalan's capture in Nairobi in 1999 by Turkish agents acting on a CIA tip. As a condition of pending European Union membership, Turkey in 2002 legalized Kurdish-language education and radio broadcasts (theretofore banned, along with all outward expression of Kurdish identity). Since early 2013, Ocalan and fellow rebel leaders have been in talks with the Turkish government, ostensibly to end with disarmament of the PKK in return for increased rights for Turkey's Kurds.

But during his years behind bars at Imrali Island prison off Istanbul, Ocalan's politics have evolved. Moving away from his former quasi-Maoism, he has become inspired by Mexico's Zapatistas and read the works of Murray Bookchin, the late Vermont eco-anarchist and theorist of Social Ecology. In a 2011 prison manifesto, "Democratic Confederalism," he reformulated the revolutionary aspiration as regional autonomy rather than state power.

That year, revolution broke out in Syria, escalating to

armed insurgency after the regime of long-ruling dictator Bashar Assad repeatedly massacred protesters. A four-way civil war ensued: between the Assad regime and its supporters, the various rebel factions under the banner of the Free Syrian Army, jihadist factions (most significantly ISIS), and the Rojava Kurds. The Kurdish PYD and its affiliated YPG militia force were able to effectively take power in Rojava in 2012.

The PKK and PYD are sibling organizations, closely allied and both adhering to Ocalan's thinking. The PKK and its allies in eastern Turkey have been building their own system of parallel power, also on the basis of assembly-based direct democracy, around a body called the Union of Communities in Kurdistan (KCK). Simultaneously, the PYD and its allies launched Tevdem and became the actual power in Rojava.

Popular power was being built on both sides of the border along the lines of a libertarian municipalism rooted in the theories of Bookchin and the practice of the Zapatistas.

PKK and YPG forces rapidly mobilized after ISIS seized much of northern Syria and Iraq in June 2014.

They coordinated with the Peshmerga, the KRG's military force, in northern Iraq, and played a key role in lifting the ISIS siege on Mount Sinjar, where some 100,000 displaced Yazidis were encircled and threatened with extermination.

In late October, when it became clear that the YPG had turned the tide at Kobani and was an effective fighting force against ISIS, the US began dropping arms and supplies to them, and targeting the ISIS positions outside Kobani with air-strikes.

So, we are witnessing the strange outcome of US imperialism, for its own ends, backing an anarchist-influenced resistance movement—for the moment.

Turkey's conservative President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been very unhappy about this. Under US pressure, he allowed a force of Peshmerga to pass through Turkish territory to come to the aid of Kobani in October, but refused to allow PKK fighters to cross into Syria to join the defense of the city.

The border has been tightly secured. The nearly 400,000 people who have fled the ISIS advance in Rojava have been allowed to cross into Turkey only at a few closely controlled checkpoints, where suspected YPG fighters are detained.

Turkish forces have fired on refugees who attempted to cross without going through the checkpoints, winning condemnation from Amnesty International. In a grotesque spectacle, Turkish tanks lined up at the border and did nothing as ISIS shelled and advanced on Kobani, not two kilometers away. Erdogan continues to call the PYD "terrorists," perversely equating them with ISIS.

**Imagine Kurdish radicals applying
anarchist Murray Bookchin's concept
of libertarian municipalism to a
Syrian town under siege from ISIS.
It's happening!**

The PYD, meanwhile, accuses Erdogan (a moderate Islamist) of cynically conniving with ISIS, allowing the jihadists to use Turkish territory as a rear-guard, in a bid to crush the Rojava autonomous zone.

All this has sparked widespread protests by Kurds and their supporters in Turkey, leading to street clashes both with police and organized Islamists that have attacked the demonstrations. In mid-October, this escalated to Erdogan ordering air-strikes on PKK strongholds in eastern Turkey, portending an end to the ceasefire. Members of the Turkish organization Revolutionary Anarchist Action (DAF) have mobilized aid caravans for Kobani and holding protests at the militarized border.

Erdogan has very shrewdly endorsed the demand of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and Syria's opposition that the US adopt their program for the ouster of Assad, and begin a no-fly zone, in exchange for their cooperation against ISIS. But Erdogan is also calling for a Turkish-controlled buffer zone in northern Syria, the area now controlled by Tevdem. This is a deft move to pit the Syrian opposition against the Kurds.

The PYD-YPG has formed an alliance with the FSA against ISIS, and FSA troops have also joined the defense of Kobani. But there is tension between the two. FSA fighters recall that Bashar Assad's father Hafez Assad had supported the PKK in the 1980s (even while denying civil rights to Syrian Kurds). In confused multi-factional fighting in 2013, the YPG was accused of collaborating with the Syrian regime against jihadist and even FSA-aligned rebels. Ironically, the bitterly opposed Assad and Erdogan are both playing an Arab-versus-Kurdish divide-and-rule card.

While the FSA is an amalgam of former regime military commanders, moderate Islamists and angry but basically non-ideological foot-soldiers, the civil opposition that started the Syrian revolution in March 2011 still exists.

The Local Coordination Committees (LCC) have kept alive a civilian resistance, even under heavy regime bombardment in the besieged Syrian city of Aleppo. Civil activists even organized courageous protests demanding the return of their disappeared comrades in ISIS-controlled Raqqa. Their already precarious position cannot have improved since Raqqa has come under bombardment by both the US and Assad's warplanes.

The rise of ISIS has also seen the US in a *de facto*, unspoken alliance with Iran, which is said to have elite Revolutionary Guard units fighting in Iraq. The PKK has its own ally in Iran, the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK), which has waged a sporadic insurgency against the Tehran regime.

For the first time since the Spanish Revolution and Civil War of the 1930s, an anarchist-oriented movement is on the frontlines of the world struggle. The Zapatistas of southern Mexico have been an inspiring example since their 1994 uprising, but the marginal nature of the Chiapas rainforest is among the factors that have allowed them to survive.

Rojava, on the other hand, is strategically placed on the global stage, where the imperial powers play their Great Game. Over the past century, Kurds have been repeatedly

cultivated as pawns, only to be betrayed, leading to the saying, "Kurds have no friends but the mountains."

The US is now maintaining that the PYD is a separate organization from the PKK, so Washington is not breaking its own law by backing a State Department-listed foreign terrorist organization. In November, left-wing German lawmakers actually unfurled the PKK flag inside the parliament building to protest the EU's listing of the group as a terrorist organization.

Now that the US, of necessity, is backing the PYD against ISIS, what will become of the Rojava autonomous zone? Once ISIS is defeated will the PYD ultimately be crushed in deference to Washington's NATO ally Turkey? It can seem that the PYD stands an almost inevitable chance of being betrayed as both anarchists and Kurds, two groups that have historically been subject to serial betrayals.

Or, will the PYD be wooed away from the PKK with the promise of arms and support, and groomed as an imperial client? PYD co-chair Salih Muslim met in Paris in October with the US State Department special envoy for Syria, Daniel Rubinstein. In a bid for support, PYD rhetoric emphasizes a common struggle with the West against Islamist terrorism.

Is it possible to imagine a third alternative? Is it possible that the heroism of Rojava, contrasted with the brutality of ISIS and Assad and the cynicism of Erdogan, will inspire a general revolution across the long-divided Kurdish lands? Dare we dream of an independent (or at least highly autonomous) confederalist and revolutionary Kurdistan with ISIS, Assad, Erdogan, the ayatollahs and US-backed Baghdad regime all defeated?

The answer may partially lie in whether anti-authoritarian forces worldwide can mobilize effective solidarity with Rojava and find tactically astute ways to respond to a complex political reality.

As this is written, Kobani remains under siege, even if the ISIS ring around the town has been driven back. Any extension of the Rojava revolution, indeed its survival, depends on the defeat of ISIS, first and foremost.

What can we do to help?

At a minimum, supporters in the West can demand that Turkey open its borders both ways—to refugees fleeing Kobani and PKK militants coming to its defense. We can demand that the US and EU both drop the PKK from their hypocritical terrorist organizations lists.

We need to raise our voices today in defense of Kobani as our forebears did in solidarity with the Spanish anarchists fighting to defend their own autonomous zones and against a fascist advance.

—December 2014

*Bill Weinberg is the author of *Homage to Chiapas: The New Indigenous Struggles in Mexico* (Verso Books, 2000) and is currently at work on *Pachamama Rising: The New Indigenous Struggles in the Andes*. He is editor of the online *World War 4 Report*, where he blogs on global autonomy struggles.*

Served Nine Years for a crime that was never committed

Green Scare Prisoner Eric McDavid Freed From Prison

SACRAMENTO, CALIF.—On January 8, Green Scare prisoner, Eric McDavid, was ordered released from prison after nine years because the government admitted to withholding documents from the defense at his 2007 trial.

U.S. District Judge Morrison England ordered him freed by granting a joint request by attorneys from the Civil Liberties Defense Center (CLDC) and the Department of Justice. Just as his supporters charged, Eric spent nine years in prison because of a rigged trial and a lying FBI stoolie.

Jenny Esquivel, Eric McDavid's partner and an organizer with his support committee said, "Since 9/11, the United States government has mercilessly entrapped people, destroying their lives just to make political examples of them, especially in Muslim communities."

"The government has targeted leftists and anarchists with similar fervor. This, like so many other alleged conspiracies the public hears about, are FBI inventions from the start," Esquivel charged.

McDavid was arrested in 2006 and convicted for conspiring to damage or destroy property that he deemed destructive to the environment, although no such destruction occurred, nor was any attempt made. He was sentenced to 235 months in prison – almost the 20-year maximum.

The same judge accepted an alternate plea by McDavid to general conspiracy carrying a maximum sentence of five years but since McDavid already served nine, he was immediately released. In exchange for the reduction, the government insisted McDavid waive all claims for civil damages.

McDavid and his two codefendants were entrapped by an overzealous FBI, and its then 19-year-old, pink-haired informant, "Anna," who lied on the stand.

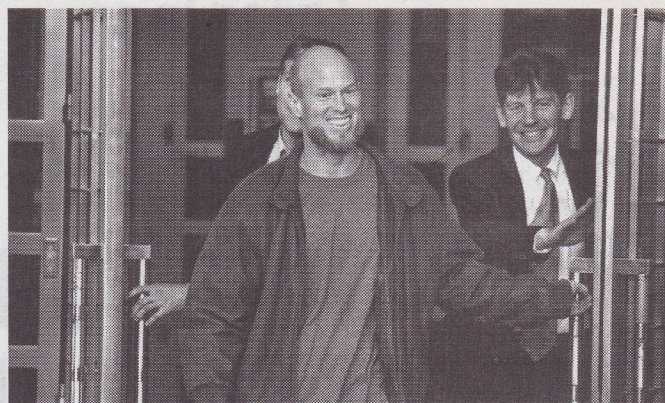
Eric faced an unfair trial, and lost nine years of his life. He leaves prison without so much as a, "Sorry about that."

According to Ben Rosenfeld, one of McDavid's CLDC attorneys, "Anna literally herded the group together from around the country, paying for their transportation, food, and lodging." "And when they failed to show enthusiasm for her schemes, she berated them and threw fits," he said. "Any conspiracy that existed was hers not theirs."

Anna admitted at the trial that the FBI trained her to exploit McDavid's romantic feelings for her by telling him: "We need to put the mission first. There's time for romance later."

McDavid sent Anna love letters and other correspondence that the

government concealed from the defense, turning over one letter and ten emails for the first time this past November.



Eric McDavid leaves prison with his lawyers after serving nine years after a rigged trial in which the government withheld evidence.

Additional government documents which surfaced only after trial show that the FBI urgently ordered, then inexplicably cancelled a polygraph examination of Anna, and that extensive surveillance of McDavid prior to Anna's influence over him failed to reveal any predisposition to commit the charged offense.

CLDC's Mark Vermeulen said, "If the government had provided the missing information to Eric's trial counsel, as should have been done, counsel would have used it to question Anna's veracity and to show Eric was entrapped. He never would have had to spend nine years in prison."

Anna first came to the attention of the FBI at 17 after writing a community college paper about infiltrating political protest groups. The FBI assigned her to attend the 2004 national political conventions in Boston and New York, a global trade summit in Georgia and anarchist gatherings in Iowa and Indiana.

Her current whereabouts are unknown, but it's doubtful she still sports pink hair.

FE note: You can write Eric, c/o SPS, POB 163126, Sacramento CA 95816.

Donations to help his re-entry can be made through his web site supporteric.org/howtohelp.htm#Fundraising

**Now, let's Free Marius Mason
and all Green Scare &
Political Prisoners. Info at
NYC Anarchist Black Cross
nycabc.wordpress.com**



Anna, the FBI rat, who entrapped Eric McDavid, & gave perjured testimony at his trial.

Living in an Armed Madhouse: Reflections on Mass Shootings

Graphic: Stephen Goodfellow. "Two Bodies" goodfelloweb.com

BRYAN TUCKER

As the disturbing trend of mass shootings has steadily become a staple of American society, they serve as one extreme example of the collapsing modern social order.

Factors related to the rampages are isolation, hierarchy, the nature of school (where spree shootings often occur), militarization, and language.

In these incidents which are increasing in frequency, an aggregate is attacked, as shooters fire at the most accessible throngs of people, going after anyone in close proximity.

The rampages typically begin with a lone, young male entering a populated area and opening fire in an attempt to kill numerous others, then killing himself, making it seem that shootings of this nature are a devastating last stop on the route to suicide.

Besides educational settings, mass shootings commonly happen at grotesque mass consumer locales like shopping malls, movie theatres, and chain restaurants, often in suburban or small town milieus, and generally, in the places most thoroughly subjugated by dominant/serialized culture.

In schools, frequent sites of spree killings, a hierarchal culture of dominant winners and predatory types get glorified, while those designated as losers get punished or ostracized. Timid and taciturn individuals are often humiliated and intimidated. Schools come to be seen by potential shooters as suitable targets to inflict violence and to impose fear and humiliation in retaliation for what they have been subjected to.

The mentalities of spree shooters develop within schools, malls, and cyberspaces of individualistic, hierarchical, consumer society. Most shooters demonstrate exaggerated versions of traits that are common to many Western males, such as coldness, self-righteousness, loneliness, and anomie. More-

over, many come from middle or upper-middle class backgrounds, but experience lower status existence in social or school contexts, seeing their acts as revenge against higher status peers.

Cultural theorist Paul Virilio explains that a militarization of consciousness pervades global civilization and that people are civilian soldiers living in a logistics-based social order dominated by techno-logic.

Aside from the pervasive warlike atmosphere in which we all exist, many of those who commit spree shootings, it is frequently noticed, have a ramped up fascination with weapons, war, and first person shooter video games.

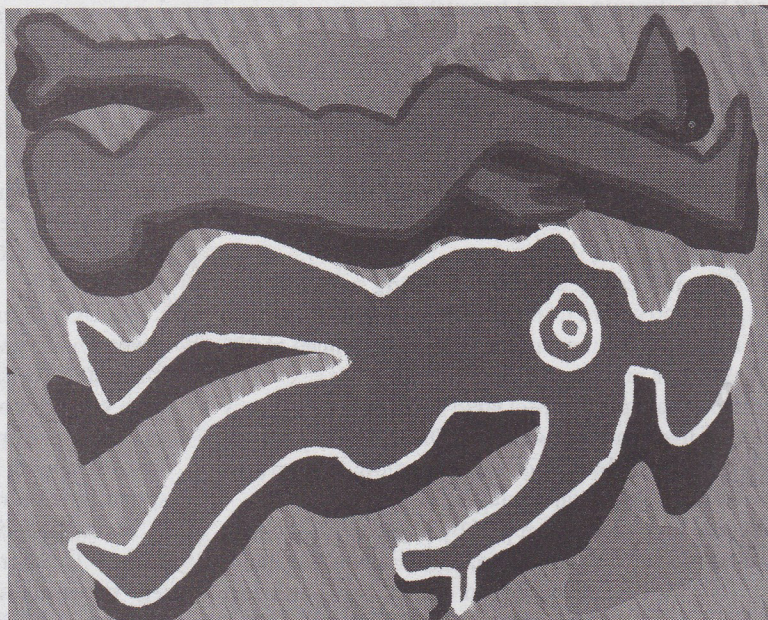
The use of language also seems important

in relation to the rampage phenomena since many young shooters tend to be shy and unwilling or unable to manifest the more culturally valued male style of effusive verbal-linguistic self-assurance (i.e., being loud and confident). It appears that many who commit these types of attacks have grown intensely weary of their experience of continual disconnection, whether from not relating to those around them, or simply from isolation.

This disconnect is associated with dominant communication patterns, as the established language blueprints of the mainstream schema maintain and reproduce the coldness and hierarchy ubiquitous in the prevailing order.

The lower status rampage shooter tends to differ in some ways from the high-ranking, vociferous male in how he imposes pain and patriarchy. Instead of using a combination of words and behaviors to steadily dominate and stifle others, the reticent spree shooter inflicts his will all at once in a dramatic, impersonal, and deadly exploit.

Primitivist theorist John Zerzan and Beat writer William



Burroughs both offer theories on the modern spirit of words that may be relevant to the verbal withdrawal common among spree shooters. Zerzan sees symbols as having replaced most of reality, believing that we now live within a system of dominant and manipulative symbols to a greater degree than we do within our bodies or with each other.

The mainstream language system that Zerzan refers to is displeasing for all who are caught in it. It is true, though, that low ranking individuals seem to suffer the biggest consequence, since partaking in the dominant linguistic patterns means perpetuation of an inferior position in the chain of command.

Burroughs writes that words are a virus existing for the sole purpose of replication, believing that language starts from outside the human host and typically comes to inhabit the developing subject in the manner of an infestation or infection. In many of his books, he uses words to break customary linguistic patterns, showing that language can also be used for liberatory objectives, though he cautions that more often than not words have been used to dominate and manage.

In healthy, non-dominating communication, instinct is es-

teemed, wholeness is supported, and allowances are made for numerous styles and degrees of expressiveness.

While mass shootings are not quantitatively vast in terms of loss of life in comparison to other widespread phenomena such as war or cancer, they express an immense amount of significance in directing attention towards major social concerns.

As capitalism, information technology, and the security apparatuses continue to develop, social alienation, apathy, and anomie proliferate, and the incidences of mass shootings will undoubtedly increase. Implementing a different social composition, dismantling the noxious and enveloping cybernetic-militarized surroundings, breaking away from the prevailing speech patterns, and creating autonomous spaces without the elements of hierarchical and patriarchal domination, are necessary in order to change the circumstances that generate rampage shootings and cause a myriad of other sufferings.

It seems clear that in a social situation which promotes a multitude of divergent, self-directed arrangements, spree shootings would be very unlikely to occur.

Bryan Tucker toils in the healing sector, and likes to study and write about the intersections of culture, psyche, and health.

Including for the ghastly death of anarchist Salvador Puig Antich

Will Franco Era Spanish Fascists Finally Be Brought to Justice?

DAVID PORTER

On October 31, an Argentine judge, Maria Servini de Cabria, issued international arrest warrants and extradition requests to question and try 20 Spanish Franco-era officials accused of crimes against humanity from 1939-1975.

Spanish General Francisco Franco led the Nationalists, a military/fascist rebel group, to eventual victory in a civil war (1936-39), overthrowing the democratically elected republican government and quashing revolutionary social change led by anarchists and others.

At least five of the mid- and high-level officials, including several ex-cabinet ministers, approved the 1974 strangulation-by-garrote torture execution of Salvador Puig Antich, a 25-year-old Spanish anarchist. Puig Antich

belonged to the Movimiento Iberico de Liberación (MIL), a loose militant network of Spanish anarchists and anti-authoritarian far leftists, that carried out a series of armed bank expropriations to support the self-organized revolutionary workers movement of Barcelona in the early 1970s.

In 1973, he and another MIL militant, were arrested following an ambush in which Puig Antich was badly wounded during an ensuing shoot-out. He was charged with the murder of a Guardia Civil who was killed in the incident.

Puig Antich's quick trial before a military court was a farcical, but typical dis-

play of Francoist justice. The stacked police case was exposed at the time by MIL supporters as falsified and inconclusive since the cop was shot by more bullets than Puig Antich's gun had fired and he was already too wounded to shoot back in his own self-defense. Nevertheless, he was found guilty and sentenced to death.

Despite an international campaign against his execution, the regime defiantly ordered his sentence carried out to uphold Franco's far-right dictatorial politics in the face of pressures for regime liberalization and angrily responding to Basque ETA separatists' assassination of the Spanish prime minister a month af-



Puig Antich was garrotted in 1974 for his fight against fascism despite a worldwide campaign to stop his execution.

ter Puig Antich's arrest.

MIL members were inspired by May 1968 in France and liberation struggles elsewhere, but also specifically by the 1930s anarcho-sindicalist movement in Spain and its guerrilla activists after 1939. Opposed to self-promoting leftist avant-garde grouplets and paramilitaries, MIL militants disbanded their organization even before the arrest of Puig Antich and others in late 1973.

Several who escaped arrest and new supporters in the anti-execution and MIL prisoner support campaign launched a new network in France, the Groupes d'Action Révolutionnaires Internationalistes (GARI). Two months after Puig Antich's execution, GARI kidnapped an important Spanish banker in Paris, Angel Baltasar Suarez, and demanded an end to executions, release of all MIL and many other political prisoners in Spain plus a large ransom for the cause.

While no prisoners were released, about three million French francs were handed over, though most were soon recovered by French police. Subsequent armed attacks on regime targets by other groups followed, inside and outside of Spain. But in 1976-77, following Franco's death, the Spanish Communist Party and other left and centrist parties made agreements with Franco's successor, essentially legitimizing the regime by seeking only reforms within the right-wing political framework while gaining some relief from government repression.

As part of the accord, Spain in 1977 created an amnesty law against prosecutions of either side's politically motivated actions during the Franco period.

The Argentine judge justified her intervention by the same universal jurisdiction standard of international human rights law concerning crimes against humanity (such as torture and mass murder) that is used by the International Criminal Court in The Hague. This standard was used by Judge Baltasar Garzón in Spain to justify both his order for the

arrest of Chilean ex-dictator Augusto Pinochet in 1998 and his attempt to indict top Bush-era figures for acts of torture. If proven that such crimes cannot be prosecuted in the country where committed, certain countries (including Spain until 2009, Argentina, and over a hundred other states) have a constitutional or legal mandate to prosecute human rights cases against foreigners.

Catalonia's parliament in 2004 recommended that the state "should annul all judgments and sentences declared under the Franco regime." Three years later, Spain's socialist-led government passed



Still from 1996 Spanish movie, "Libertarias," tells the story of *Mujeres Libres*, anarchist women who fought the fascists.

a Historical Memory Law merely condemning the Franco regime, removing all of its public symbols, and helping to fund local "associations for the recovery of historical memory" investigating local atrocities under Franco. But successor conservative politicians have blocked such public funding. Meanwhile, Judge Garzón was removed from office after ordering investigations into Nationalist murders of 114,000 victims during and after the civil war.

Eighty years have passed since the Spanish nationalist/fascist revolt against the elected republican government and almost 40 years since the amnesty law. While visiting Barcelona two years ago, I was struck by the minimal public commemoration of loyalist, let alone specifically anarchist, resistance to the right-wing insurrection, of the suffering of Barcelona's residents during and after the civil war, and of the widespread revolu-

tionary social transformation in the city and surrounding countryside before Franco's victory.

To the south, in the Ebro Valley that experienced major wartime battles, I was equally surprised that a local civil war museum presented military paraphernalia and background information on both adversaries, with purposeful (and painful) equanimity. By such stances, no one is to blame; no historical judgments can be made.

Franco's legacy of fear persists among politicians and much of the older population, while his political heirs are still strongly embedded in the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the military, and the police. The politics of history are quite alive and contentious in today's Spain. The 1977 amnesty law remains in place.

While Judge Servini de Cabria's recent decision from afar is, on the surface, a welcome public recognition of certain Franco regime crimes, it obviously causes only a small dent in the historical record and present day consciousness. It also tends to personal-

ize and scandalize these practices of repression instead of indicting the whole regime, and of course does nothing for long-ago victims. At the most, international arrest warrants will be issued, preventing these aging defendants from traveling to certain destinations abroad.

However, the October 31 arrest warrants open a much richer conversation on the very nature of international human rights law generally. What is at stake here is the strong sense, ideal and practice of freedom without hierarchy vs. mere assertions of *civil* or *legal* human rights.

The latter are reformist, confined by arbitrary limits and framing by states with their own political agendas, procedural legalisms, and escape clauses (as with Bush and Obama defenses of torture and civilian bombing deaths in the Middle East).

While civil libertarians such as Roger

Baldwin, founder of the ACLU in the 1920s, were inspired by and often supported anarchist Emma Goldman's freedom campaigns, their efforts were within the restricted framework of constitutional and local laws, thus acknowledging in practice the legitimacy of judicial interpretations and the state in general.

Goldman rejected this approach because it is the very existence of the state and capitalism everywhere (along with other forms of hierarchical oppression) that limits human freedom.

In other words, while international human rights law, just like domes-

tic civil liberties and civil rights cases, can sometimes cause restrictive barriers temporarily to fall and individual oppressors to be condemned, human rights discourse is reformist and statist by nature and serves to hide the overall inevitable reality of statist oppression.

Thus, actually adding to state stability.

We can easily identify with the concept of human rights victims and understand their efforts and those of their friends, families and supporters to leverage soft state tools, such as legal redress when available, against hard state persecution and repression.

Similarly, when trapped by the state, anarchists and other anti-authoritarians have usually accepted legal assistance in their own defense.

But we should remember, whether or not one agrees with specific strategy and tactics utilized in the Barcelona and broader Spanish context of the early 1970s, that Puig Antich and other anarchist revolutionaries risked their lives not to reform particular regimes, but to overthrow the entire system of hierarchical rule.

David Porter is author of *Eyes to the South: French Anarchists and Algeria*.



1963-2014 Sam Mbah Dies Pioneer of African Anarchism

KELLY ROSE PFLUG-BACK

Sam Mbah, Nigerian activist, journalist, lawyer, and co-author of *African Anarchism: The History of a Movement*, passed away November 6, after suffering unexpected complications from a heart condition for which he had recently undergone surgery.

Mbah was an outspoken advocate of anarchist alternatives to global capitalism, and dedicated his life to providing anarchist models of organizing against government corruption, militarism, climate change, and other social and environmental issues.

During his youth, Mbah co-founded the Awareness League (AL), an anarchist organization, with a small group of other young men who, like

Mbah, had been obliged by Nigeria's former military government to complete a one year national service.

The League organized with other Nigerian civil society groups as well as international anarcho-syndicalist groups to resist the militaristic regime of the junta government which had been established in 1983 and lasted until 1999.

In the late 1980s, Mbah was brought to the attention of the American anarchist movement through the work of Neither East Nor West-NYC and the Workers Solidarity Alliance. They arranged a 1998 tour where he spoke in many U.S. cities, as well as supporting his group in several other ways.

When the Nigerian dictatorship arrested four AL members, demonstrations were called at seven of the country's consulates on an International Day of Action in February 1993, including Moscow, Rio de Janeiro, Dublin, New York, London, Berlin, and Hamburg. All were freed, the four being the first prisoners allowed bail under an emergency decree.

Fifty-nine articles in 16 languages were published on the case from as far away as Turkey, Estonia, South Korea, and South Africa. The Nigerian state then left the dissidents alone.

In a 2012 interview, Mbah mentioned that he and other activists had established a new group called Tropical Watch to focus on issues of sustainable development, environmental protection, and industrial and governmental cor-

ruption.

A significant part of Mbah's legacy is his dedication to building upon the parallels between anarchist values and the systems of social and economic organization practised by many African peoples prior to the colonial imposition of capitalism and rigid social and political hierarchies.

"[A]narchism as an ideology, as a corpus of ideology, and as a social movement, is removed to Africa," He stated in the interview. "But anarchism as a form of social organization, as a basis of organizing societies, that is not remote to us. It is an integral part of our existence as a people."

In an era of catastrophic environmental exploitation, it is increasingly imperative that anarchist movements worldwide actively support Indigenous struggles for self-determination and the preservation of the natural world.

Mbah has left us with the models for organizing which our movements need in order to accomplish meaningful solidarity and genuine progress towards a future that is not swallowed by the ravages of the global capitalism.

Honouring the memory of someone so dedicated to social change should be done not through passive mourning, but rather through heeding his words, and spurring ourselves towards the type of dedicated action which his life exemplified.

Toronto-based Kelly Rose Pflug-Back is a writer & poet. kellypflugback.wordpress.com

Jacksonville's Anarchist Collective Burnpile Press

MATT KEENE

Anarchists sweat in Florida. Dumpstered foods spoil quicker, black bloc protests require balaclavas made with moisture-wicking, breathable materials, and mosquitoes relentlessly target the sugary-sweet blood of anti-capitalists.

Out of this sultry subtropical environment has sprouted Burnpile Press. Founded in 2012, Burnpile is an informal, community supported project dedicated to producing, printing, and distributing radical literature free-of-charge. They often distro as many as 200 *Fifth Estates* each issue as well as Berkeley's *Slingshot* periodical, and many other radical used books, zines, and accessories at no cost to the reader. With no current info-shop location, all material is literally hand distributed through face to face interactions with those living in the region.

Burnpile Press works for the end of all forms of oppression, hierarchy and domination from within a community saturated in oppression, hierarchy and domination. North Florida, its home base, bleeds with the living memory of occupation. It is a region known for the longest continuously-occupied, European-established settlement in North America. This is the Dixon bioregion, a salty, pine-studded land belonging to the echoes of the long ago exterminated Timucua people, belonging to the alligators sliding into tidal marshes while little blue herons pierce the dark, muddy waters and belonging to the vigil for Jordan Davis, murdered for listening to rap, and the continuing reverberations of loud music humming on quiet nights.

The micro-press cries out from the center of Jacksonville, Fla., a city named for Andrew Jackson and his state-sponsored maniacal ethnic cleansing rampage of manifest destiny against the indigenous of the Southeast.

In this environment, painted over and again with injustice, Burnpile Press shouts out: "Do it yourself. Do it together. Do it now."

When you first visit the press's new publishing house a few miles northeast of downtown, this mantra rings true. The dedicated crew has settled into a historic century-old residence where their antique ABDick offset printing press sits in a quiet room patiently awaiting its next project.

The old bones of the publishing house and the classic footprint of the printing press find purpose in their function, as tools to distribute literature and build community, as entry points for cooperation, as a council for empowerment. There is an undeniable air of revolutionary spirit in these ageless tools, from fiery liberation through ink-stained pamphlets, to impassioned conversation beside brick-lined fireplaces.

Amidst the renovations of the 100-year-old house, there is buzz of the first literary project being created in their new

workshop; a seven part micro-zine series entitled "Free Ourselves." Each title in this series "introduces a topic relating directly to achieving greater autonomy and self-determination in our lives." The first in the series is titled "Hire Ourselves," a short introduction to worker-cooperatives, their history, and why they are good for our families and communities. With the next title, "House Ourselves," an introductory how-to on liberating spaces and establishing social housing, already in the works.

Through the old, Burnpile has pressed into the new. While addressing the need of free print material to educate communities and individuals with limited or no access to the Internet, Burnpile Press is also working to radicalize and embolden the increasingly homogenized world of tech. On the digital side



The Burnpile press. burnpilepress.org —photo: Matt Keene

of the workshop even the least adept volunteers are assisted in learning the basics of how the Internet, encryption, programming, and design software work, while coupling the politics of open source software with the purpose and vision of a free and open society.

Although a debate continues about the role of technology in organizing and resistance, Burnpile recognizes the potential of direct democracy through technology, the power of code, the might of social media, the spark of viral action and the vulnerability of the rulers in this increasingly pervasive digital world.

Burnpile Press is a weed sprouting in the widening crack of capitalist empire. It is growing with a slow, steady, stubborn intention, pointing towards the hot Jacksonville sun, warmed by the salty winds of the Atlantic Ocean, reflecting a shadow upon the concrete of the establishment, showing another possible world, a future where decisions are based on consensus, and hands are gripped in mutual aid.

Matt Keene is a journalist and web designer who has written extensively on the Ocklawaha River, the Kirkpatrick Dam, and other Florida environmental and water-related issues. His web address is riverbedammed.org.

The monument is massive, several football fields long, utterly symmetrical.

Facing each other across the length of the memorial are two huge carved statues: a kneeling Mother Russia in mourning and a Red Army soldier holding a child in one arm and wielding a sword with the other, a shattered swastika at his feet.

This is Berlin: bombastic, combative, humming with energy, steeped in history. Seven thousand bodies lie at rest under the Soviet War Memorial, only a twenty-minute walk from where I am staying. The memorial pays tribute to the more than 80,000 Soviet soldiers who died liberating the city from the Nazis in the 1945 Battle of Berlin.

I arrived in Germany's capital city in late August, tired and hungry after the nine-hour bus ride from Frankfurt. I'd impulsively planned this trip, a solo backpacking adventure through Europe, on a budget that would turn out to be much too small, but I didn't know that yet. I walked from the bus depot to the train station, thinking that I was in a city just like any other. But Berlin is an entity unto itself, and proved me wrong again and again.

In my five days there, I walked the length and breadth of the city, from early morning to late evening. One of the first things I noticed was that, in stark contrast to the United States, the cars are tiny, even the minivans, and the people, helmetless, ride bicycles everywhere. Not once did I see a traffic jam. The city is utterly flat and has no downtown; Mitte, the wealthiest neighborhood, where the embassies, government buildings, and historic memorials are concentrated, could be thought of as the city center. But there are no skyscrapers. Only the television tower in Alexanderplatz rises above the city, blinking into the night.

In the United States, highly-developed downtown cores radiate outward into endless suburbs. Here in Berlin, I am cut adrift in a strange low-density sea. There's nothing to orient oneself to; the city is an amorphous mass, a collection of neighborhoods, demarcated by shifting borders. I stayed with friends of friends in Treptow, a neighborhood sandwiched between the better-known Kreuzberg and Neukölln.

This area, formerly the poorest section of East Berlin, has long been home to a mix of immigrants and working-class Berliners, and like many other parts of East Berlin, is succumbing to a slow tidal wave of gentrification that began in the neighborhoods of Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg. The process is the same, it seems, whether one is in my hometown of Seattle or in Europe. Geographer Tim Butler calls them "marginal gentrifiers," otherwise known as artists, young pro-

An American Anarchist in Berlin

RACHAEL STOEVE



An anarchist squat in Berlin where a new society exist in miniature and is also a launching point for actions.

Berlin is a city whose rich history rings with memories of anarchist martyrs who organized clandestinely against the Nazi and communist East German regimes, suffering tremendous repression.

Since WWII, Berlin anarchists have been at the forefront of militant activities opposing the state and are known for their networks of communal, often squatted buildings.

fessionals, and unconventional, move into low-income neighborhoods seeking cheap rent. Cultural critics declare such neighborhoods the next place to be, thanks to the cool factor associated with avant-garde residents. Then the developers move in and the wealthy follow. Long-time residents and marginal gentrifiers are forced out into other neighborhoods, and the cycle begins again. Along the way the marginal gentrifiers are blamed, but the process begins and ends with the pernicious forces of capitalism acting on a population to force changes resulting in higher profits for the wealthy, and further precariousness for those already living on the edges.

Berlin is an example of gentrification on a macro scale; the entire city was, for a long time after the wall fell, mostly an inexpensive place to live, but is now in the midst of a real estate boom. Foreign developers are buying up large tracts of the city and transforming them into high-priced apartments and condos.

According to Hamburg's *Der Spiegel*,

“residential real estate prices in Berlin have risen by 32 percent since 2007.” And in October 2014, Bloomberg quoted data from a German firm that found some areas of Berlin have seen rent prices jump by 30 to 40 percent. Berliners have long been vocal in their opposition to gentrification, with crowds in the hundreds and sometimes thousands turning out in protest, burning cars and breaking windows along the way. A law passing rent control measures is set to go before the German parliament soon.

The Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989, barely more than three months after I was born, but it still exists as a double line of bricks, set into the pavement, running through the entire city along the path of the wall. Even without a physical marker, you know when you cross that line since, oddly, the pedestrian crossing signals change, sometimes from block to block. In the former West Berlin, the man indicating that it's safe to walk looks much like he does in the United States. In East Berlin, he is like a cartoon soldier with a cap.

The knowledge of history induces a kind of double vision. In Berlin, over and over, I felt time fold over on itself. My trip became a study of walls. On my first day in the city, I wandered down the East Side Gallery, the longest surviving stretch of the Berlin Wall. It is covered in murals painted by international artists that invoke and memorialize the struggles of oppressed peoples. Scrawled across the murals are messages from years of people who have visited the Gallery. The two most common inscriptions? “Free Palestine” and “ACAB,” the latter an acronym for “All Cops Are Bastards.”

“Seeing the wall confirmed for me that we humans have a natural aversion to division - and an inexorable urge for liberation,” I wrote that night on Facebook.

A few days later, I visited Checkpoint Charlie, once one of the best-known border crossings between East and West Berlin. Today, it is the very definition of a tourist trap, bordered by shops selling communist-themed nostalgia, with actors in World War II-era US Army uniforms available to pose for pictures.

But a few blocks away, the streets are deserted, and an unobtrusive memorial stands on one corner of an intersection. I went over to it and stood on the spot where in 1962, 18-year-old Peter Fechter was shot by East German border guards while crossing the militarized zone in an attempt to escape from the German Democratic Republic. He bled to death for two hours while guards on both sides looked on, until East German guards came and took him back into the GDR. He was one of the first of at least 136 people who were killed trying to escape East Germany.

Berlin is shaped by walls, but it is also shaped by resistance. From the people who died trying to make it to West Berlin, to the people who fought back within East Germany and risked the repression of the Stasi, the national secret police, this is a city that slides magnetically toward freedom. Today, squats dot the landscape and graffiti blooms across every open surface; unlike in the United States, where “broken windows” policing rules the day and graffiti is a scourge to be eliminated, street art here seems to be entirely left alone.

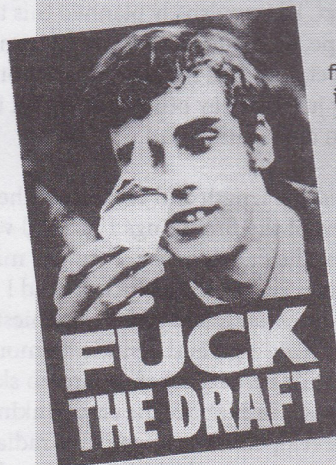
The squats are hubs of anarchist and anti-authoritarian communities. Paul Hockenos, in a recent *Boston Review* essay, “Zero Hour,” writes that the fall of the Wall, “unleashed a groundswell of utopian energy and DIY zeal,” in East Berlin as state enterprises collapsed and buildings were left open for squatters to claim. Today, there are squats across the city that host workshops, community meals, concerts, and other events. They are connected by [StressFaktor](#), a website that maintains a directory of squats and a calendar of political and social events, and are often the rally point for demonstrations.

At first glance, in the bus depot, Berlin seemed like just another city. By the time I left, in the chilly dawn of a Tuesday in late August, I was in love. Berlin sneaks up on you, draws you in with history and expansive parks, speaks to you in graffiti and banners dropped from squatted buildings. It is a site of the most basic struggle that of the struggle of humans against physical and invisible walls.

The former has been torn down. The latter still exists, in gentrification and oppression, but if any city can dismantle those final barriers, it is Berlin.

Rachael Stoeve is a writer and activist based in Seattle. You can follow her on Twitter: [@rachaelstoeve](#). She also frequently posts on the FE Twitter account.

Vietnam! Call for Submissions: Fifth Estate Summer 2015



The war in Vietnam, the first great defeat of American imperialism, came to an ignominious conclusion 30 years ago, at the end of April 1975.

The United States Congress has authorized the Secretary of Defense “to conduct a program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War.” This obscene commemoration of a shameful war should not go unanswered. We need to remind the world of its true heroes and victims—the Vietnamese people, the anti-war movement, and the

draft resisters—and say No! to the celebration of the imperial war machine.

Deadline: May 1 Publication: June 1

Submit manuscripts for short pieces and proposals for longer essays, along with graphics and photographs to:

fe@fifthestate.org or Fifth Estate, PO Box 201016, Ferndale, MI 48220, USA. Please put “Submission 394” on subject line of email.

We also seek non-theme submissions on general topics.

The Society of the Spectacle

Guy Debord

Newly translated & annotated by Ken Knabb,

Bureau of Public Secrets, 2014,
150 pages. \$15. bopsecrets.org

For those interested in Situationist ideas, this is an auspicious time to reconsider Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*, originally published in 1967. Ken Knabb's recently revised translation is a valuable resource for the study of Debord and the Situationists.

The Situationist International lasted from 1957 to 1972 and had an effect far greater than its relatively small numbers (about 70 members) would suggest. Situationism (a term the Situationists rejected, preferring to be *ists* without an *ism*) had its roots in artistic and cultural movements such as Dada, Surrealism, and Lettrism, and political movements such as Marxism, anarchism, council-communism, and utopian socialism.

Guy Debord and Raoul Vaneigem were the best-known figures, and Debord's book and Vaneigem's *Revolution of Everyday Life* are the most famous and influential works. Knabb, known for his translations of Debord and other Situationists, calls Debord's text, "the most important radical book of the 20th century.

Knabb has not only improved his already very competent and readable 2004 translation, but has also added extensive and useful notes. Debord was sometimes vague about his sources, so Knabb has tracked them down, often adding helpful comments on their significance. Furthermore, he has included extensive background and bibliographical information on radical and revolutionary history. He also cites other Situationist texts on various topics, which is extremely useful, since there is an unfortunate tendency to equate all Situationist ideas with those of Debord.

Situationism reached many impasses, yet made a huge contribution to the development of radical thought. It still has crucial lessons for the left, and anarchists in particular. If the Situationists had done nothing else, it would be enough that they showed the fecundity of the encounter between Marxism and anarchism, and the folly of being naively and reactively "against Marx" in the name of anarchism. They show us why we need to be *for Marx* for the sake of anarchism, and *against Marx* for the sake of Marx.

After almost a decade of theory and provocation, the Situationists moved to the center of the political stage in 1966, when Situationist-influenced students at France's University of Strasbourg published Musta-



—Max Cafard & Hieronymus Fisch

The Society of the Spectacle Reconsidered: Good Marx or Bad Marx?

JOHN CLARK

pha Khayati's historic text, *On the Poverty of Student Life*. It had a radicalizing influence on the student movement and foreshadowed the major social convulsion about to come.

Two years later, the Situationists, in alliance with the radical student group, the *Enragés*, emerged as a major force in the May-June 1968 French General Strike that mobilized over ten million people and nearly toppled the Gaullist regime.

They achieved lasting fame through their role in street fighting and occupation of the Sorbonne, and especially for their slogans and posters that covered the walls of Paris. Ones such as, "The more I make love, the more I want to make revolution," and, their most famous, "Be realistic, demand the impossible," still echo today.

The Situationists introduced a number of concepts that revolutionized the left's imaginary landscape. They took up Marx's idea of social alienation and developed it into what they called "the critique of separation." In-

spired by utopians like Fourier and by surrealism, they focused on the need for the total destruction of repressive forces and for the liberation of desire.

Their central theme was the dominance of the commodity in capitalism. They updated Marx's idea of the fetishism of commodities, arguing that not only does the commodity become an alien force that dominates the human, the whole system of commodities fuses into an overwhelmingly powerful imaginary reality called the Spectacle.

Against this Spectacle they proposed the creation of "situations" that would be the "radical negation of the element of competition and separation from everyday life," and would prefigure "the future reign of freedom and play."

But what they did more concretely was called *détournement*, which means "diversion," or, perhaps more pertinently, "embezzlement." The idea is to appropriate something in a subversive manner, which they did most notably with comics. They substituted revolutionary slogans or absurdist comments in the speech bubbles of comic characters—and the rest is radical history.

Another major Situationist concept is psychogeography, which gave birth in practice to the tactic of psychogeographical exploration of the city through the *dérive*, or drift. A *dérive* is "a mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances." This quest for the strange and the marvelous was to have a major influence on radical and avant garde cultural tendencies.

A final key Situationist idea is *recuperation*, or cooptation. Debord's depiction of the Spectacle's seemingly infinite powers of cooptation implicitly predicted what would inevitably befall the Situationists' own ideas. As these were absorbed into consumer culture and academia, we would ultimately see neo-Situationoids busily accumulating cultural capital by (in their terms) "detourning" and "recuperating," rather than subverting and coopting.

But Situationism is found today not only in the museum of cultural critique. It has also continued to shape radical politics. In France, it has had an important influence on the Tiqqun and the Invisible Committee groups and its mark is

evident in their much debated texts like "The Call" and *The Coming Insurrection*.

Since its initial printing at the Detroit Printing Co-op in 1970, the first English translation of Debord's, done collectively by those who printed it, *Society of the Spectacle* has seen seven printings by Black & Red with distribution totaling 30,000 copies.

The first stapled edition showed a high-rise office building on the cover, but later versions featured the iconic 3-D glasses wearing audience.

The Black & Red edition is available at blackandred.org as are many other titles including *On the Poverty of Student Life*.

In the U.S., the influential 2009 California student strike text, "Communiqué From an Absent Future," echoes in some ways the radical critique of "The Poverty of Student life." And CrimethInc, the American decentralized collective of autonomous cells, which has been a significant radicalizing force for many young anarchists, would be unthinkable without the Situationists.

The Society of the Spectacle remains a historic work for its highly advanced and sophisticated critique of both corporate and state capitalism. When the Situationists launched their critique of the Spectacle, both Marxist and anarchist thought were mired in obsolete analysis based on an earlier stage of historical development.

The Situationists were far ahead of the left in general, and the anarchists in particular, in shifting away from the one-sided focus on the repressive state, repressive productionist culture, and authoritarian ideology as the salient mechanisms of domination and instead highlighted the role of domination through commodity consumption and the consumptionist imaginary. Debord must also be given credit for his ferocious demolition of Leninism, which was only strengthened by his use of radicalized Marxian categories in his critique.

Debord gets good Marx for all this

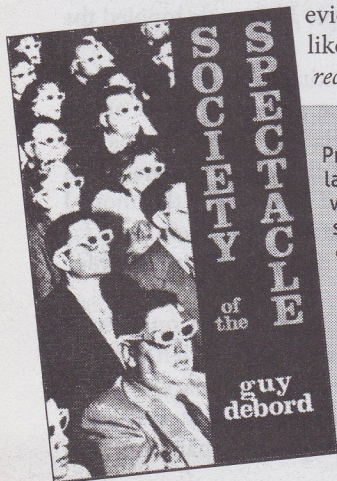
Debord also deserves credit for his position on the key issue of popular power. When one reads Debord, one learns, perhaps misleadingly, that the Situationists placed all their world-historical bets on something called "Worker Councils." Despite the term "worker," they recognized the importance of organizations in both the *workplace* and in the *local community*.

Moreover, they defined the term council not as an elected representative body, but rather as a democratic, participatory *assembly* of workers or local community members that remains the true locus of power. Long before Murray Bookchin made his "libertarian municipalism" a big and supposedly novel deal, the Situationists presented a strong defense of the communal assembly as the key popular institution.

Here, they were both prior and superior, in that they stressed the importance of both *workplace* and *community general assemblies*, while Bookchin lapsed into an abstract idealist fetishism of the municipality. On this point, Debord deserves credit for pointing the way toward the needed synthesis of the most radically democratic aspects of the anarcho-syndicalist and anarcho-communist traditions.

But, there were from the beginning serious flaws in Situationist thought and practice. There quickly developed a "real split" between the critical dimension and the creative, transformative side, and this proved historically disastrous.

The Situationists seemed to think that an aesthetic and intellectual elite could focus on theory, critique and subversive adventures, while the proletariat could somehow be counted on to revolt—eventually. As a result of this split, the Situationist legacy has been on one side an extreme aestheticization, a non-engaged ironicism, a vanguardist cultural elitism, a Left spectacularism, and a depoliticizing cooptation by a sterile oppositional culture



and by hip academia.

On the other side has been an activist tendency toward insurrectionism, groupuscule, hypermarginalization, and organization “at a distance” from the real life of the community and the real direction of history.

What was always missing in the highly masculinist Situationist image of revolt were the dimensions of community and care, and the positive moment of engagement in processes of social and ecological regeneration.

The Situationists negated the historical agency of women and indigenous and traditional peoples in particular, but they also gave little recognition to the creativity of the masses of people who live under the existing system of domination, neglecting the dimensions of personal and communal life that the spectacle does not succeed in colonizing. They present an image of a humanity that seems almost helpless in the face of

As resounding calls for radical negation and uncompromising critique, they possess an energy and imaginary force that most of the left can't begin to aspire to.

the overwhelming power of the Spectacle, left only with the hope for the miracle of a revolution somehow triggered by radical critique and marginal projects of provocation, creative vandalism, and insurrection.

Despite this problematical legacy, the Situationist and Situationist-influenced texts offer indispensable lessons. As resounding calls for radical negation and uncompromising critique, they possess an energy and imaginary force that most of the left can't begin to aspire to. They have inestimable value for their capacity to traumatize, to destabilize, to shake the reader out of the paralysis of the everyday, and to inspire.

Problems arise with the lack of direction or the misdirection that comes after the inspiration. But without the inspiration, we remain nowhere (the preferred destination under capitalism).

The strengths of Situationism—its critical and visionary power—comes in large part from its ability to cross-fertilize the anarchist and Marxist traditions. An awareness of the failures of Marxist theories of the state, party and class should not obscure anarchists understanding of the significance of Marx as a philosopher of liberation.

The Situationists' development of his ideas of alienation, commodity-fetishism, and reification within an anti-authoritarian context, and their ability to think in terms of dialectical contradiction and radical reversal, demonstrates this significance quite strikingly.

I love the irony of big corporations' raving (in the name of profit) about the virtues of *The Society of the Spectacle*: There are now three translations of the work in print, and it has pen-

etrated the intellectual popular culture to a certain degree.

You can now find ads all over the internet that mindlessly repeat the same clichés about the book. A long blurb begins by touting the book as “the *Das Kapital* of the 20th century.” The major purveyors all agree totalistically with every last word of the long spiel.

Even Knabb's claim that it is “the most important radical book of the twentieth century,” is a rather grandiose claim. Nevertheless, *The Society of the Spectacle* is somewhere up there with the most influential works, and one might certainly wish that it had actually left Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?*, Mao's *Little Red Book*, and Guevara's *Guerilla Warfare*, in the dust.

John Clark is a writer, educator and communitarian anarchist activist in New Orleans, where his family has been for twelve generations. He teaches for Common Knowledge: The New Orleans Cooperative Education Exchange.

His most recent book is *The Impossible Community: Realizing Communitarian Anarchism*. He works on ecological restoration, permaculture and eco-communitarianism on an 83-acre land project on Bayou LaTerre, in the forests of coastal Mississippi. He is a member of the Education Workers' Union of the IWW.

We Lose SchNEWS: Britains Action News Sheet

After 691 issues, SchNEWS, “The free weekly direct action newsheet published in Brighton, England since 1994” is no more. A mix of serious reporting and irreverent humor, it was born in a squatted courthouse as part of “Justice?”—Brighton's campaign against the repressive British Criminal Justice Act.

Soon after, some staffers decided to put out a regular news sheet to spread the word about local happenings further afield in the UK, including reports on anti-road fights, struggles such as the Liverpool Dockers, opposition to privatization of public services, reporting on social centers, and sustainable futures.

During its long run, SchNEWS was a regular at protests and events, photocopied by loyal readers and passed out by the thousands. Later, it became available on the Web, making it instantly available worldwide.

While treating all stories with great respect and seriousness, SCHNEWS also routinely injected a great deal of humor into its reporting. Just navigate to schnews.org.uk (while it's still there) to get an idea of the brazen style and spirit.

IF YOU MOVE, BE SURE THE NOTIFY US. The Post Office does not forward Magazine Mail. Use the form at FifthEstate.org.



DEBT & the Movement That Is Challenging it

The Debt Resisters' Operations Manual
Strike Debt,

PM Press, 2014, 256pp. Available on line from strikedebt.org or PMpress.org

ALEX KNIGHT

The good people of Strike Debt have revised and expanded their very popular, "Debt Resisters' Operations Manual," (DROM) into a full-length book. It is half political and historical analysis of how indebtedness has come to define so many aspects of our lives and half a practical how-to guide for people struggling with various forms of debt to seek individual relief and collective action.

Strike Debt defines itself as "a nationwide movement of debt resisters fighting for economic justice and democratic freedom."

As an ideological and practical tool, the DROM is highly valuable and appropriate to our time of crisis. What remains to be seen is how to transform the growing distress of the millions affected by debt into a grassroots mass movement, which is the only vehicle that can ultimately overthrow the debt system (capitalism) and liberate the future. Organizing campaigns against more focused targets, such as the student loan industry, may be the best way to cohere the analysis and outrage of Strike Debt into national (or global) upheaval.

The Manual is very comprehensive in its survey of the pillars of debt. The original chapters from the old pamphlet version of the DROM are still here, in slightly updated form: Credit Card and Automobile Debt, Medical Debt, Student Debt, Housing Debt, Municipal and State Debt, as well as "Fringe Finance" products and services which primarily take advantage of the "unbanked" through such extortionate avenues as payday loans and check-cashing services.

In addition, the new DROM also includes chapters on Tax Debt, National Debt, Climate Debt, as well as Credit Scores, Debt Collection and Bankruptcy. Each chapter, written by different anonymous authors, is detailed in its approach yet broad enough to remain accessible to the general reader. The clear purpose is for those who suffer from a particular form of indebtedness to be able to understand the political significance of that debt as an institution, and therefore to politicize the personal and remove the veil of shame that tends to surround those of us who happen to be stuck with it.

This politicization of the personal is one of the great successes of the book. Rather than viewing one's own debt as a mark of individual failure which sets one apart, the book argues, "[Debt] is quite typically the outcome of people and families just trying to survive under capitalism." Seeing this as a unifying, political force is what leads to Strike Debt's brilliant slogan, "You Are Not a Loan."

However, the challenge is how to turn theory into strategic action with the capacity to involve large numbers of people in a process of organizing for liberation. In this regard, the Manual offers only modest value. While the book's historical/political framework is educational for those seeking social change, it comes up short in suggesting effective routes for people to apply those lessons in the practice of grassroots organizing.

Most of the practical, how-to sections of the book are focused on individual tactics for debt relief or avoidance. These are worthy of being included and not insignificant. Understanding how to contest one's debt with collection agencies, or in court, could provide tangible relief and allow greater freedom for many individuals.

However, the book's last chapter, "Prospects for Change" (subtitle: "Join the Resistance!"), which is one of the few sections dealing explicitly with collective action, is only seven pages long. Even the majority of that is taken up by historical review of past debt resistance movements rather than

proposals for what can be done now and how ordinary people can work together to challenge the existing paradigm.

This deficit is unfortunate, but understandable. No one yet knows how to build a debt resistance movement today, or they would be doing it already. Strike Debt has shown in its actions to date that it is at least willing to experiment and be bold in its attempts to spark interest and participation.

Rolling Jubilee, one of their projects, buys bad debt from creditors for pennies on the dollar with funds contributed by supporters, but instead of collecting it, abolishes it. Their site, rollingjubilee.org, states, "Together we can liberate debtors at random through a campaign of mutual support, good will, and collective refusal."

The effort has attracted major media attention to the debt system's oppressive nature and that there are people standing up to it. But capitalism will not be defeated by spectacular theatre alone.

More inspiring was a recent disruption and takeover of a U.S. Department of Education meeting by Everest Avengers, a new group made up of present and former students of Everest College and other for-profit colleges in the Corinthian Colleges network. This action was led by working class women and people of color, demographics preyed upon by for-profit colleges that offer the illusion of an education but saddle many less fortunate young Americans with debt that will last their entire lives.

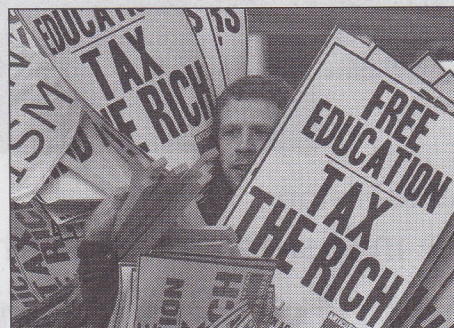
It is hopeful to see those most affected by student debt taking the lead to challenge it, since of the six million Americans currently in default on their student loans, 60 percent are women and a disproportionate 57 percent are people of color. Perhaps this new direction of organizing for-profit college students, facilitated by the Debt Collective, also part of Strike Debt, will lead to greater numbers of young people participating in their own liberation.

In Philadelphia, I have joined with other student debtors to initiate a campaign called Strike Student Debt, which aims to accomplish exactly that. Youth are always on the forefront of movements for liberation, and the student debt crisis in this country has reached epic proportions, such that 70 percent of college graduates in 2012 owed an average of almost \$30,000 upon graduation.

Understanding that, we've decided to take Strike Debt's excellent theoretical framework and attempt to construct an organizing framework that aims to mobilize large numbers of Americans through the principles of direct democracy and direct action. To this point, we've focused primarily on research and education, outreach, and a few local actions, but we aim to expand the campaign to other cities in the near future.

The question for us in Strike Student Debt, and for everyone concerned about debt in general, is how do you organize a mass movement against debt? Direct action campaigns have historically been very effective in targeting a localized source of evil, such as a factory or racially segregated facility,

The question for us in Strike Student Debt, and for everyone concerned about debt in general, is how do you organize a mass movement against debt?



Thousands of students took to the streets of central London in November to rally against tuition fees, education cuts and student debt.

but where exactly does the production of debt occur? Can we throw our bodies on "the gears and the levers," to quote Berkeley's Mario Savio, by attempting to shut down private lenders or banks, which legally have no public obligation other than to make profit?

It is similarly difficult to imagine a student strike on campuses being effective enough to force universities across the board (some public, some private, some explicitly for-profit) to collectively agree to slash tuition. When something like this happened in the Maple Spring of Quebec two years ago, students merely prevented a potential tuition hike from about \$1,000 to \$2,000 at public universities.

Or, in Germany recently when students forced the government to remove all university fees, those fees had only existed since 2006. Unlike Canada, or Europe, the U.S. has gone much further down this disastrous road, and it may take mass confrontation with all the centers of power in this country, from Wall St. to Washington, to produce real change.

As the authors of the Manual point out, "Debt is a profoundly effective form of social control," and so breaking the shackles of debt will not be a simple task of mobilization.

It also must involve regular people beginning to see themselves as unwilling to be controlled in the old ways.

This is a possibility that becomes more real each time we discuss it or take action that prefigures such a vision, and for that reason we all owe Strike Debt our gratitude for producing this substantial literary contribution.

Alex Knight is the editor of EndOfCapitalism.com. He is active in many social movements attempting to build new democratic pathways. Reach him at alex@endofcapitalism.com.



Photos: John Collier



Detroit City Hall 1973: Fake guru arrives to accept the key to the city, but also gets a pie in the face.

1973: Fifth Estate History: The Ultimate in Disrespect for Authority FE Staffer Puts a Pie in God's Face

For fifty years, the *Fifth Estate* has reflected on the world's most contentious social issues including critiques of religion and its appeal to those in need of justifications for their oppressive goals.

Those who question or show disrespect for the basis of their quest for domination suffer threats, often which are acted upon.

The toll of attacks on the creators of anti-religious ideas and images, including, but hardly limited to Charlie Hebdo in France, is reminiscent of a near-fatal episode from this publication's past.

In August 1973, a 15-year-old Indian youth, Guru Maharaj Ji, fashioning himself as The Lord of the Universe and other self-inspired superlatives, visited Detroit to promote an upcoming event in which he was to participate.

Thanks to some string-pulling by local followers, he was to receive a key to the city. At the City Hall ceremony, the Perfect Master was cream-pied square in the face by Pat Halley, a 23-year-old *Fifth Estate* staffer.

After heaving the pie, Halley quickly escaped, helped by some strategic blocks to his pursuers from several friends. News of the incident spread first through the local media and then

worldwide.

Pat explained his motives at the time, "The guru is just a slick businessman. I always wanted to throw a pie in God's face. God represents the ultimate in authority and I represent the ultimate in disrespect for authority."

The young Lord seemed to take the shaving cream pastry pasting in stride, telling reporters, "I just want to apologize to that person who did that to me. I don't want him arrested or hurt. If someone doesn't understand something, he cannot be held responsible for what he does."

**"I always wanted to
throw a pie in God's face."**

But some of the Great One's followers apparently didn't agree. A week after the incident, two of the guru's devotees, claiming to be disillusioned apostates from his divine teaching, gained Halley's confidence by offering to reveal secrets of their sect that could lead to a news scoop for the *Fifth Estate*.

Cornering Pat in his home, they attacked with blackjacks in an assassination attempt. Interrupted by Pat's screams for help and the intervention of neighbors, the cult members fled the scene. Halley survived with 55 stitches

and a plastic plate implanted in his skull.

We savor moments of total disrespect for authority; we cheer and honor those individuals and groups who pull them off. But we know from experience that the vicious defenders of the Great Ones and their ideas often stand ready for revenge and punishment.

Sometimes authority bears down on us in a diffuse way, as in the daily alienation and humiliation of work. Sometimes it is more direct and personal, as our brave comrade experienced it. In either case, disrespect is appropriate, vigilance required.

Pat Halley's disrespect for authority, and his contributions to this publication, extended for decades beyond the pie incident.

After Pat's 2008 death, at the age of 57, the FE's David Watson eulogized Pat's life: "He came from a place and context that is not supposed to produce artists or visionaries—a rough and tumble, working-class Detroit background.

"He wrote for the *Fifth Estate*, published books of poetry, and worked in several theater troupes, organizing a rough, spontaneous, proletarian theater of cruelty in the Primitive Lust Theater and the Freezer Theater, in the vernacular and spirit of down-and-dirty Detroit."

David's eulogy and articles about Pat are in our web site archives using Search. More at CassCorridorTribe.com.

Who's Listening & What Can You Do?

A Protester's Guide to Cell Phone Use

FE Note: The police have always done surveillance of revolutionaries. What is new now is the technological capabilities of government snoops. Being noted on paper 3X5 cards didn't stop our predecessors, and their electronic gadgets won't deter us.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation defends civil liberties in the digital world. Founded in 1990, the San Francisco-based EFF states that it "champions user privacy, free expression, and innovation through impact litigation, policy analysis, grassroots activism, and technology development."

With major protests in the news again, they recently updated their Surveillance Self-Defense guide which includes more detail on security threats facing mobile phone users. Below are excerpts from the Guide. It is available at eff.org in its entirety.

There is a massive volume of law enforcement requests for cell phone data—ranging from location information to actual content—and widespread use of dedicated cell phone surveillance technologies. On the other hand, strong Supreme Court opinions have eliminated any ambiguity about the unconstitutionality of warrantless searches of phones incident to arrest, and a growing national consensus says location data, too, is private.

Protesters want to be able to communicate, document events, and share photos and video with the world. Doing so means facing a complex set of considerations about the privacy of the data those phones hold.

The guide helps answer questions about how to best pro-

Test at the a BART station in San Francisco, August, 2011.

test that data, and what rights protesters have in the face of police demands.

BEFORE THE PROTEST

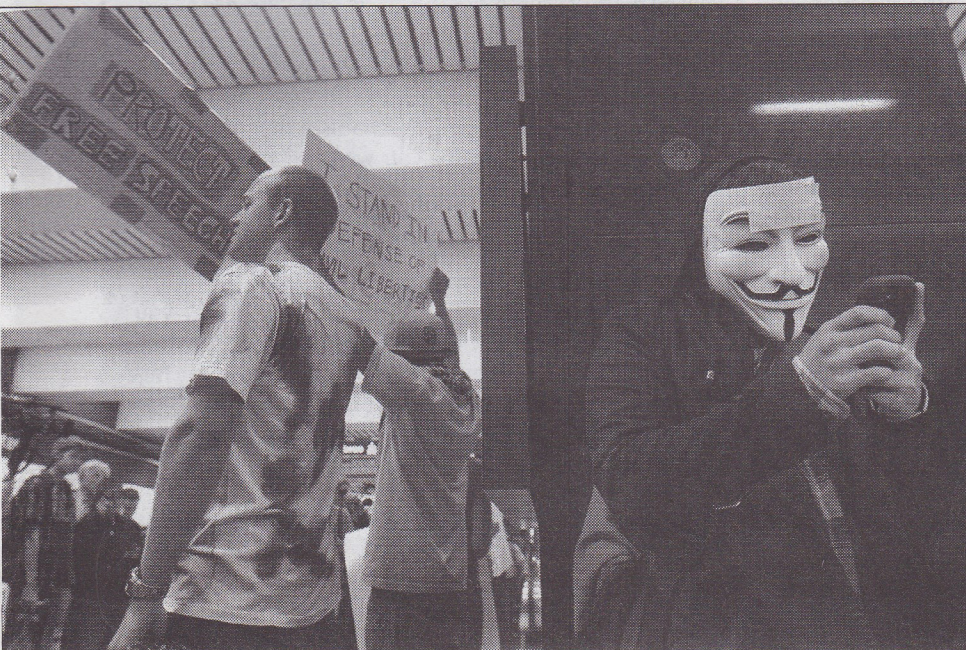
THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT WHAT'S ON YOUR PHONE. In 2011, law enforcement in many states argued that they could search the contents of a phone incident to arrest without a warrant. Today, Due to a unanimous Supreme Court decision in *Riley v. California*, that's no longer the case. Still, if you can avoid carrying sensitive data, you don't have to worry about it getting pulled off the phone. That can include photos, address book, application data, and more. If you don't need it for the protest, consider removing it for the duration.

If you have access to a temporary phone with only the essentials, that might be a better option. Modern smartphones record all sorts of data, and there may be overlooked sources of sensitive information.

PASSWORD PROTECT YOUR PHONE. Password protection can guard your phone from casual searches, but it can still be circumvented by law enforcement or other sophisticated adversaries.

Start using encrypted communications channels. Text messages, as a rule, can be read and stored by your phone company or by surveillance equipment in the area. If you and your friends can get comfortable with encrypted communications channels in advance, that can keep prying eyes off your texts while they're in transit.

Direct messages through social media may be encrypted while in transit, but can be subject to subpoenas from law enforcement. You may wish to explore end-to-end encrypted options, like Whisper Systems' TextSecure,¹ Guardian Project's mobile IM software ChatSecure, or the mobile version of Cryptocat, or Whisper Systems' RedPhone (for Android) or Signal (for iOS) for voice calls, which only store the contents of your communications in an encrypted, unreadable form. >>>>>



End-to-end encryption does not protect your meta-data. In other words, using end-to-end encrypted communications will keep law enforcement from being able to read the contents of your messages, but they will still be able to see who you're talking to and when you're talking to them.

AT THE PROTEST

Keep control of your phone. You may wish to keep the phone on you at all times, or hand it over to a trusted friend if you are engaging in action that you think might lead to your arrest. In any case, you can set the lock screen to turn on quickly, so that if you do lose control of your phone, nobody else gets access easily.

TAKE PICTURES AND VIDEO OF THE SCENE. As the ACLU says in a recent *Know Your Rights* guide, "Taking photographs of things that are plainly visible from public spaces is a constitutional right." Unfortunately, that doesn't stop law enforcement officers from occasionally demanding that protesters stop doing exactly that.

If you're planning to document the protest, you should read the whole guide ahead of time. There are special considerations for videotaping, too, so make sure to brush up on that if you plan to be recording video.

Finally, you may wish to explore options that upload directly to another server. Livestreaming sites, and even social media services, can make sure photos and videos get online before law enforcement officers have a chance to delete them.

HELP, I'M BEING ARRESTED!

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT—about your phone and anything else. If questioned by police, you can politely but firmly decline to answer and ask to speak to an attorney.

If the police ask to see your phone, tell them you do not consent to the search of your device. Again, since the Supreme Court's decision in *Riley*, there is little question that officers need a warrant to access the contents of your phone incident to arrest, though they may be able to seize the phone and get a warrant later.

If the police ask for the password to your electronic device you can politely refuse to provide it and ask to speak to your lawyer. Every arrest situation is different, and you will need an attorney to help you sort through your particular circumstance.

Note that just because the police cannot compel you to give up your password, that doesn't mean that they can't pressure you. The police may detain you and you may go to jail rather than being immediately released if they think you're refusing to be cooperative. You will need to decide whether to comply.

OK, NOW HOW DO I GET MY PHONE BACK?

If your phone or electronic device was seized, and is not promptly returned when you are released, you can file a mo-

tion with the court to have your property returned. If the police believe that evidence of a crime is on your electronic device, including in your photos or videos, the police can keep it as evidence. They may also attempt to make you forfeit your electronic device, but you can challenge that in court.

Increasingly, we keep our most sensitive communications and personal information on our cell phones. We carry in our pockets these devices that can tremendously enhance our ability to exercise our First Amendment rights, but which also carry serious privacy risks.

An added word of caution from the Fifth Estate IT Advisor

You may have been told that encryption of electronic files, use of the TOR network, secret messaging services, et al, are a safeguard against revelation of information.

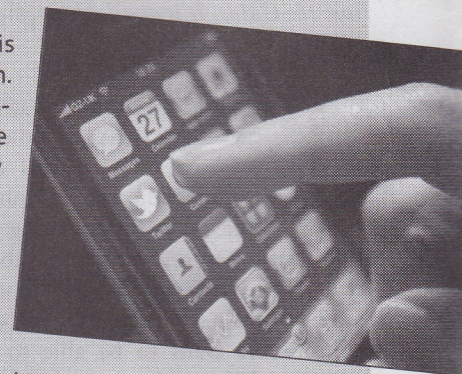
However, there is no certain protection. For every tactic proposed to communicate securely, a security expert can propose a theoretical countermeasure. Even the mere use of encryption flags the government to watch your traffic, no matter how innocuous its content.

Governments are gathering information about us at a fantastic rate. Fiber optic cables, local internet service providers, even the various devices that we all use and assume belong to us only, are observed, tapped, and regularly evaluated.

For instance, it can be reasonably conjectured that every device connected to the internet is infused with some eavesdropping mechanism that can record your keystrokes, identify you whether on your own device or not, divine your location even if frequently changed, know the lineage of your friends and family, understand your politics, know where you are, even who you are sleeping with.

Even more frightening: What matters is that you can eventually be tracked if considered a worthwhile investment in server analysis time, and then every human association in your life will be cross-referenced.

This kind of information is the oft mentioned metadata, that is, data points that infer the danger you represent to the authorities.



Is the only choice "YES" or "NO" for a new nation?

Autarchy in Scotland

In September 2014, the people of Scotland voted on an independence referendum question, "Should Scotland be an independent country?" Following an intense campaign, the "No" side won with 55 percent voting against independence with a turnout of 85 percent.

Alexander writes from Glasgow with an assessment.

ALEXANDER (FOR RETORT)

Nobody in their right mind welcomes, or encourages, the entry into the world of another nation-state, unless (as is often the case, alas) the new non-entity seems the only way to shake free of another, more dismal or ruthless form of oppression—Empire, Homeland, United Kingdom.

The past two years have seen a sustained campaign to break the fiction of the "United Kingdom" apart, or at least to begin that process, by creating a rival fiction called "Scotland." Many of the rituals of Scottishness—tartan, Burns night, haggis dinners—are a nineteenth-century invention, and the official Party of Scottish Nationalism is the full inheritor of this flummery, combining the promise of a future of endless Highland Regiment tattoos with a rate of corporation tax low enough to put a smile on Rupert Murdoch's death mask.

This is the level on which the debate about an independent Scotland has been enacted and reported in the UK mainstream. There has been talk of a continuing constitutional crisis, even after a flurry of last-minute panic promises and threats from Westminster, the seat of British gov-

ernment, contrived to steer 55 percent of voters into the No camp—"Scotland votes resoundingly for dependence," as no newspaper quite had the courage to put it.

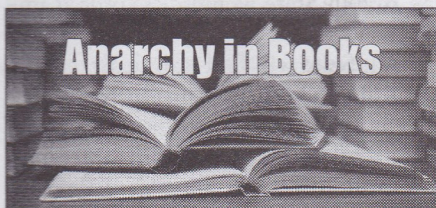
Committees will report on Scottish powers over income tax and "job seekers allowance" (read: the dole). Britain's Labour and Conservative Parties, each with their own stake in the constitutional status quo, will ensure that the time of political soul-searching peters out in an eternity of conventions.

There is, however, another side to the story. Two other sides, in fact. The first has to do with the peculiar reality underlying the fiction, "Scotland," and the depth of its involvement in the project of British Empire. The second, the old mole working in the earth, under the bland aggregate of the No vote's 45 percent, is the energy of refusal and remaking of politics that has gathered, to everyone's astonishment, under the independence banner.

First things first. England and Scotland have shared a monarch since 1603. Their two parliaments became one in 1707, and decided to call the new realm Great Britain. In the aftermath of the defeat of the Jacobite rebellion forty years later, Scotland became the full junior partner in Great Britain's imperial expansion, and took a share of the spoils.

In a ploy typical of nationalism's intelligentsia everywhere, the current ideologues of Scotland gloss over the bloodiest border in the history of the island, the geological boundary separating Highland from Lowland Scotland. The profitable partnership between the Lowland bourgeoisie and the English imperialists, which enlisted the defeated

>>>>>> NEXT PAGE



A sampling of the fine books we receive

Who's Afraid of The Black Blocs?: Anarchy in Action Around the World, Francis Dupuis-Deri, 2013, PM Press pmpress.org

The Watcher, Nicholas P. Oakley, 2014, See Sharp Press, SeeSharpPress.comp; Sci-fi

The End of the World As We Know it?: Crisis, Resistance, & the Age of Austerity, edited by-

Deric Shannon, 2014, AK press, akpress.org

Order Without Power: An Introduction to Anarchism, 2013, Seven Stories Press, SevenStories.com

The Wild & The Free: Shane, Rousseau, Hippies, Donal McGraith, 2013, Charivari Press, CharivariPress.com

The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance & The Origins of the United States of America, Gerald Horne, NYU Press, nyupress.org

Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed, James C. Scott, 2009, yalepress.yale.edu

PUBLICATIONS

Modern Slavery, #3, modernslavery.calpress.org

Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed; anarchy-mag.org



Want to write a letter about our Anti-Marx section?

We assume our essays critical of Marxism will generate a large number of responses. Limit letters to 400 words. If you want to suggest an essay in reply, please contact us.



To many in the Scottish independence movement, leaving the empire meant getting rid of Britain's four Vanguard-class submarines armed with Trident II D-5 ballistic missiles, able to deliver thermonuclear warheads from multiple independent re-entry vehicles.



Highland regiments in its sanguinary colonial business, is now over, because the Empire is over. And, crucially, the end of Empire coincided with the discovery of vast oil deposits in Scottish waters.

The politics of oil, and of Scotland's resources generally, have been salient in the debates surrounding independence. That Scotland, which from the 1980s on, saw a chance of building an oil-boom welfare state along Norwegian lines, and then saw that chance confiscated or sabotaged by Westminster, is certainly one key to recent Scottish nationalism.

Other dimensions to the politics of United Kingdom dominance have been largely passed over in silence. One would have thought that in debating the pros and cons of a break-up of Britain, the "Irish question" would have been bound to figure centrally as a point of reference with its terrible, exemplary history of home-rule balloting, secession, invasion, civil war, partition, and religious strife. It has proved too painful a comparison to contemplate.

Similarly, the question of the new or old state's atomic arsenal. The zones of sacrifice created by nuclear states since the first atom bomb was exploded at Alamogordo, New Mexico, are concentrated in their colonial and aboriginal spaces—Oceania, Algeria, Kazakhstan, Woomera, Rajasthan, and Nevada.

No surprise, therefore, that the British missile fleet is based

not in England, but on its Celtic fringe, a mere 25 miles from downtown Glasgow and about 40 miles from half the population of Scotland. In assessing the dangers in 2000 of a major accident at the Clyde Naval Base in Faslane, Scotland, home to the UK's nuclear weapons system, the UK Ministry of Defence concluded that the resulting "societal contamination" meant that "the risks are close to the tolerability criterion level." Close to, but not beyond it, apparently.

As the days ticked by toward the independence vote in September, it was hard to extract oneself from the general atmosphere of panic. There really did seem a chance of the Union ending.

Since the No vote, we have seen not only the cynical superficiality of the English response—if we were forced to promise these Scots more "devolution" to keep them from leaving, then let's immediately fuel the phony demand for "English votes for English laws"—but also the arrival, and endurance, of a new political landscape north of the border.

The Labour Party will probably lose electoral hold of its traditional working-class Scottish base. The Scot Nationalists may gain from Labour's implosion in the short term, but what matters is the intensity and persistence of a new autonomist movement far to the left of both.

Predictably, Scottish anarchists were split between a tactical desire to assist in precipitating a full-blown crisis of the British nation-state, and a refusal in principle to play any part in electoral politics.

James Kelman, Scotland's finest novelist, articulated the case for staying clear of the ballot box altogether: "A vote YES or NO is a vote for the political system that allows it. If there was any possibility that the apparatus could effect a change in the system, then the British State would dismantle it immediately."

Nevertheless, the British State will find it difficult to stifle the popular debate sparked by the referendum. On November 22, in the aftermath of the No vote, Glasgow's Clyde Auditorium hosted an all-day Radical Independence Conference, facing directly the questions of land ownership, energy policy, and nuclear weaponry. It put the Scottish movement in the context of European crisis.

Three thousand people bought tickets, and many more were turned away. (Equivalent to 30,000 in London.) The figures who have emerged during the campaign are virtually unknown in Scotland, never mind south of the border. Their voices crystallize Scottish anger, and speak to a range of political futures that "politics as usual" goes on trying to silence.

They are defining the terms of a new realism. What happens next is, for once, truly hard to predict.



MARXISM:

Obscuring More than It Reveals

Criticism & Critique of a Failed System

INTRODUCTION

Inside the walled compound of a Buddhist monastery on the outskirts of Kyoto, Japan, the monks who reside there have created a meditation garden consisting of raked sand and about a dozen large stones.

The stones are adroitly arranged so that no matter where one stands on the perimeter of the garden, at least one of the rocks is blocked from sight of the viewer. The Zen wisdom behind this arrangement suggests that the world in all of its aspects is never completely knowable; that something always remains hidden.

If you are aware of being disadvantageously situated to view the entire panorama and move to see what you missed, another stone, previously within view, simply disappears from sight, now blocked by the one you had at first not seen.

Zen parables aside, we live in an epoch where the mystification of the processes of daily life have been raised to levels of religiosity. So, it becomes imperative to have as clear a view of the world and our roles within it as possible. For some, Marxism became the critical tool for examining the world and the social relationships built into the economies which humans have constructed.

Not only does Marxism purport to give a detailed critique of capitalism, but it places into an apparently understandable context, the history of human societies as well as positing a humane view of the future. In this regard, Marxism stands alone in history (aside from religions) in providing this at-

tempt at a complete view of the human condition.

What always strengthened Marxism's claim to authenticity was its assertion that it was objectively examining the forces of history; that it was "scientific socialism" distinguishing itself from all "nonobjective," "utopian" varieties. Here is where we can hark back to the Zen garden. The assumption that Marxism provided a clear view of everything, that it hid nothing from view, was exactly its great appeal to many.

However, upon examination, Marxism begins to appear so fraught with contradictions, so epoch-bound, that one can easily come to the conclusion that it actually disguises more than it reveals. However, only recently divorced from the perception of its association with totalitarian Leninism, Marxism has come to have renewed currency, even among some anarchists.

In this section, our writers take Marxism to task for a variety of methodological, historical, and perceptual deficiencies and dangers. It is somewhat of a cliché to designate Marxism as a religion, but when you have an intellectual church, complete with popes, sacred writings, holy rites and liturgy, priests and acolytes, heretics and sinners, and internecine warfare between sects, what else is there to call it?

This is not to denigrate the need for a precise understanding of the world around us, but Marxism hides more than it reveals. What has moved people in past upsurges, and in many today, is a vision of a revolution based on the desire to be free of the instrumental processes of any system.

"...[I]n my view, anarchism has no significant contribution to socialist theory to make."

—Eric Hobsbawm

"Reflections on Anarchism," 1969

PETER WERBE

Hobsbawm, the late British Marxist historian, in his snobbery, unintentionally poses the question as to the function of theory of any sort in revolutionary challenges to the present system. Marxists believe it is important to come to the confrontation armed with memorized critiques of capitalism and history, believing this provides them with the organizational and critical tools for overthrowing the system.

David Graeber, an American anarchist, in his 2003 article, "The Twilight of Vanguardism," asks in a different context, "...[I]f the role of revolutionary intellectuals is *not* to form an elite that can arrive at the correct strategic analyses and then lead the masses to follow, what precisely is it?" But, it's that; Marxists make no disagreement that it is its purpose and utility.

The beauty and power of the voluminous anarchist writings through the years resides in their vision of a new world lived in circumstances when capitalism and state have been discarded. When a moment of revolution arrived historically, it wasn't because people in revolt had finally read enough analysis of their misery, but that they could no longer tolerate it.

The vision, for instance, posed by anarchism leading up to the late 1930s Spanish Revolution, came from a desire for freedom that had been nurtured for decades by writings and agitation. As the anarchists said at the time, they had "a new world in their hearts." They called this the quest for The Ideal in human affairs.



This is a rewritten & shortened version of "Marx: Good-By To All That," from March 1977, *Fifth Estate*. The original article is on our web site in the archives

Marxists denounced this as romanticism; utopian, and destroyed the revolution, not only in Spain, but in Russia before it. With all of their analysis, the main contribution of Marxism has been the gulag; for anarchists it has been revolution.

A tiny sliver of revolutionary theorists contend that Marxism can be divorced from the authoritarian utilization of its theories and become part of a larger theory of liberation. On closer examination, however, this turns out to be impossible since Marxism only has its "world historical moment" when

linked with the political forces of Leninism.

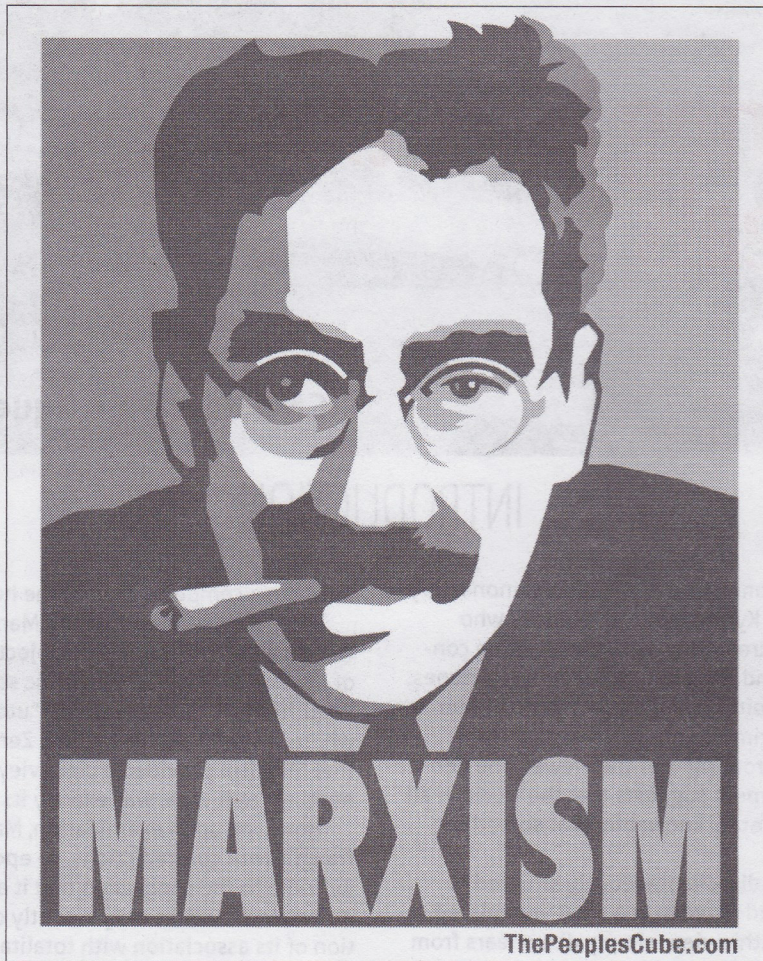
The most significant Marxist theorists, ones who brought the ideology into reality on a mass scale, are Stalin and Mao, who not only ruled in the name of Marx, but expounded on it as well. In other words, the hopes of radical intellectuals aside, Marxism only comes to power through the apparatus of the authoritarian political party with everything that implies.

The so-called libertarian variant of Marxism mostly remains confined to the university and exists with no efficacy in the real world. No one is interested in it except other intellectuals and ultimately, it, along with all of critical theory, becomes only the most interesting sector of sociology.

No longer "a spectre haunting Europe" or anywhere else, for that

matter, defanged Marxist theory has become a huge intellectual market and growth industry within academia. Written in texts often so arcane that they can only be decoded by initiates, such that Marxism is no longer reviled except by the rabid right. Those who profess this ideology (literally, professors) are elevated to positions, for example, within the American Sociological Association as "Chair of the Section on Marxist Sociology," or prestigious teaching positions at universities.

The editors of the New York-based *Monthly Re-*



THE ONLY
MARXIST
WE
SUPPORT!
THE ONLY
PARTY WE
SUPPORT IS
ON
SATURDAY
NIGHT

view, which wept at Stalin's passing in 1953, are now trying to sell us the same old Marxist ideology they have peddled all these years as a supposedly ecologically purified version. However, it's like they can't help themselves; the cover of their 2014 catalog features a photo of Lenin. In an attempt to prove it has left its moribund past, the magazine features recent articles by its editor with titles such as, "Marx and the Rift in the Universal Metabolism of Nature."

Undoubtedly, it will receive rave reviews from the Section on Marxist Sociology.

In their defense, these professors of Marxism often have a radicalizing effect on students, many who are and have been active on their campuses and beyond. However, to accept the basic tenets of this outmoded system of critique and analysis will lead them to the same ideological dead end as their mentors.

Another sector of the political spectrum advocating Marxism are the creepy, authoritarian Leninist cults with their alphabet soup acronyms featuring memberships so small they could probably have national conventions at a McDonald's and whose membership turns over faster than the restaurant's fast food workers.

The many flaws of Marxism are being treated throughout this section, so this essay examines how Marx and his epigones view humans, their function within capitalism, and how they reproduce the world which we inhabit.

Few would dispute the contention of Marx that the reigning ideas of a given society are those of the ruling class during any epoch. What has to be faced squarely, however, is not just that the Marxist concept of humans fails to transcend those of the ruling capitalist class, but that Marx's views and those of even his present-day advocates mesh exactly with those of the capitalist model.

To Marx and his followers, human beings are essentially producers and have never been anything else. The late, anti-authoritarian Marxist, Seymour Faber, wrote in *Our Generation*, "One of the assumptions underlying Karl Marx's discussion of alienation was that production was not only a means of satisfying needs outside itself, but that which made man human."

The only reason this view appears to make sense is that it is the world-view of the prevailing capitalist society and when it is repeated by Marx, it sounds just as reasonable. Instead, if this productivist model of society is viewed within its historical context, it comes through clearly as the definition needed by the ascendant bourgeoisie centuries ago to marshal the entire world out of the lethargy of feudal society and into the torrent of industrialization, commodity production, and the accumulation of capital.

This self-perception of humans as a special category of producers was unknown in human history until the capitalist epoch. Marxism makes no break with this. Marx not only relishes the productivist model, he is its strongest advocate—whatever develops the means of production is good, for the higher the degree of development of capitalism, the greater its

contradictions, the more developed the proletariat, and the greater the material base for communism (or, so the theory goes). He is a prophet of production extolling its virtues and denigrating its detractors.

When the Luddites in England, workers at the dawn of capitalism, began an assault on the production system by breaking machines, burning factories, and assassinating their owners, understanding that they were being drawn into a system that would wreck their lives and livelihoods, Marx declared that it was the bourgeoisie who were the revolutionaries in this era, not the workers. It is no wonder then that the most enthusiastic exponents of Marxism were found in the state capitalist bureaucracies of the communist countries; they functioned as the ascendant bourgeoisie.

As a vision of the future, Marxism offers only more of what capitalism has already presented us with—a continuation of the development of the means of production. No matter that the entire productive apparatus remains an externality to the humans involved, it is assumed that the quantitative development of the means of production will lead to a revolution of social relations.

This is nonsense. Every material aspect of our lives is a thing of capital, a thing that was created only for the needs of capital and never for those of humans. Our jobs, workplaces, commodities, cities, transportation, schools, dwellings; all of it developed with humans fitting in as an afterthought if considered at all. The only thing Marxism advocates is to remove the capitalist class from this process.

But exactly what is missed here is that the means of production are capital themselves and their further development will only mean our further enslavement and capital's continued domination. The very nature of the technology of capital demands centralized political control and management, and only after its dismantling, when human affairs are based on decentralized, human-scale technology, can we begin to talk about a liberated future.

Those who envision a technocratic, self-managed future where automation and cybernation satisfy all of our desires, continue to push the productivist model for coordinated economic and political control where humans remain reduced to workers, an inherent category of alienation. But it's very possible that the people affected might not want to buy the program of the leftist politicians and planners. They may not want to continue massive auto or steel production even with a workers council in charge as management.

Marxists, with their fetish of production, shudder at such a possibility of the refusal of their hobby horse, but let's be through with them. If we are going to advocate anything, let it be a revolution of desire, one that really overturns everything and sweeps away the entirety of the muck of capitalism.

Marxism stands squarely as an ideology of capital; a rigid fetter on the mind that can only make us shrink from the real potential of a human existence.

Peter Werbe is a long time *Fifth Estate* staff member.



An armed worker enjoys the burning books of Lenin during the 1956 Hungarian Uprising against the Stalinist regime. Russian tanks finally crushed the revolt.

Murray Bookchin's classic exposure of the authoritarian and counter-revolutionary nature of the Leninist party

The Myth of THE PARTY

"[The essay that follows] is not a series of hypothetical inferences; it is a composite sketch of all the mass Marxian parties of the past century—the Social Democrats, the communists, and the Trotskyists.

"To claim that these parties ceased to take their Marxian principles seriously merely conceals another question: why did this happen in the first place? The fact is that these parties were co-opted into bourgeois society because they were structured along bourgeois lines. The germ of treachery existed in them from birth."

—from *Listen Marxist!*

This is an excerpt of Murray Bookchin's 1969 pamphlet *Listen, Marxist!* A longer version appeared in the May 1976 *Fifth Estate* which is available in our archives at FifthEstate.org.

Social revolutions are not made by parties, groups, or cadres. They occur as a result of deep-seated historic forces and contradictions that activate large sections of the population.

The most striking feature of the past revolutions is that they began spontaneously. Whether one chooses to examine the opening phases of the French Revolution of 1789, the revolutions of 1848, the 1871 Paris Commune, the 1905 revolution in Russia, the overthrow of the Tsar in 1917, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the French general strike of 1968, the opening stages are generally the same: a period of ferment that explodes spontaneously into a mass upsurge.

The Glorious Party, when there is one, almost invariably lags behind the events. In February 1917, the Petrograd organization of the Bolsheviks opposed the calling of strikes precisely on the eve of the revolution which was destined to overthrow the Tsar. The workers ignored the Bolshevik directives and went on strike anyway.

In the events which followed, no one was more surprised by the revolution than the revolutionary parties, including the Bolsheviks.

The Hierarchy of Command

As the party expands, the distance between the leadership and the ranks invariably increases. Its leaders not only become personages, but they lose contact with the living situation below. The local groups, which know their own immediate situation better than any remote leader, are obliged to subordinate their insights to directives from above.

The leadership, lacking any direct knowledge of local problems, responds sluggishly and prudently. Although it stakes out a claim to the larger view, to greater theoretical competence, the competence of the leadership tends to diminish the higher one ascends the hierarchy of command.

The more one approaches the level where the real decisions are made, the more conservative is the nature of the decision-making process, the more bureaucratic and extraneous are the factors which come into play, the more considerations of prestige and retrenchment supplant creativity, imagination, and a disinterested dedication to revolutionary goals.

The result is that the party becomes less efficient from a revolutionary point of view the more it seeks efficiency in hierarchy, cadres, and centralization. Although everyone marches in step, the orders are usually wrong, especially when events begin to move rapidly and take unexpected turns as they do in all revolutions.

The party is efficient in only one respect: in molding society in its own hierarchical image if the revolution is successful. It creates bureaucracy,

centralization, and the State. It fosters the very social conditions which justify this kind of society. Hence, instead of [the Marxist concept of the] withering away, the State controlled by the Glorious Party preserves the very conditions which necessitate the existence of a State and a party to guard it.

On the other hand, this kind of party is extremely vulnerable in periods of repression. The bourgeoisie has only to grab its leadership to virtually destroy the entire movement. With its leaders in prison or in hiding, the party becomes paralyzed; the obedient membership has no one to obey and tends to flounder. Demoralization sets in rapidly. The party decomposes not only because of its repressive atmosphere but also because of its poverty of inner resources.

The Centralized Party

It cannot be stressed too strongly that the Bolsheviks tended to centralize their party to the degree that they became isolated from the working class. This relationship has rarely been investigated in latter-day Leninist circles, although Lenin was honest enough to admit it. The Russian Revolution is not merely the story of the Bolshevik Party and its supporters. Beneath the veneer of official events described by Soviet historians there was another, more basic development—the spontaneous movement of the workers and revolutionary peasants, which later clashed sharply with the bureaucratic policies of the Bolsheviks.

With the overthrow of the Tsar in February 1917, workers in virtually all the factories of Russia spontaneously established factory committees, staking out an increasing claim in industrial operations. In June 1917, an all-Russian Congress of Factory Committees was held in Petrograd which called for the “organization of thorough control by labour over production and distribution.” The demands of this Conference are rarely mentioned in Leninist accounts of the Russian Revolution, despite the fact that the Conference aligned itself with the Bolsheviks.

Leon Trotsky, who describes the factory committees as “the most direct and indubitable representation of the proletariat in the whole country,” deals with them peripherally in his massive, three-volume history of the revolution. Yet so important were these spontaneous organisms of self-management that Lenin, despairing of winning the soviets in the summer of 1917, was prepared to jettison the slogan “All Power to the Soviets” for “All Power to the Factory Committees.”

This demand would have catapulted the Bolsheviks into a completely anarcho-syndicalist position, although it is doubtful that they would have remained there very long.

In the Ukraine, peasants influenced by the anarchist militias of Nestor Makhno established a multitude of rural communes, guided by the Communist maxim: “From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs.” Elsewhere, in the north and in Soviet Asia, several thousand of these organisms were established partly on the initiative of the Left Social Revolutionaries and in large measure as a re-

sult of traditional collectivist impulses which stemmed from the Russian village, the *mir*.

It matters little whether these communes were numerous or embraced large numbers of peasants; the point is that they were authentic popular organisms, the nuclei of a moral and social spirit that ranged far above the dehumanizing values of bourgeois society.

Communes Discouraged

The Bolsheviks frowned upon these organisms from the very beginning and condemned them. To Lenin, the preferred, the more socialist form or agricultural enterprise was represented by the State Farm: literally an agricultural factory in which the State owned the land and farming equipment, appointing managers who hired peasants on a wage basis. One sees in these attitudes toward workers' control and agricultural communes the essentially *bourgeois* spirit and mentality that permeated the Bolshevik Party; a spirit and mentality that emanated not only from its theories, but from its corporate mode of organization.

In December, 1918, Lenin launched an attack against the communes on the pretext that peasants were being forced to enter them. Actually, little if any coercion was used to organize these communistic forms of self-management. The communes were not suppressed but their growth was discouraged until Stalin merged the entire development in the forced collectivization drives of the late 'Twenties and early 'Thirties.

By 1920, the Bolsheviks had isolated themselves from the Russian working class and peasantry. The elimination of workers' control, the suppression of the Makhnovtsy, the restricted political atmosphere in the country, the inflated bureaucracy, the crushing material poverty inherited from the civil war years—all, taken together, generated a deep hostility toward Bolshevik rule.

We have discussed these events in detail because they lead to a conclusion that our latest crop of Marxist-Leninists tends to avoid: the Bolshevik Party reached its maximum degree of centralization in Lenin's day not to achieve a revolution or suppress a White Guard counter-revolution, but to effect a counter-revolution of its own against the very social forces it professed to represent.

Factions were prohibited and a monolithic party created not to prevent a capitalist restoration, but to contain a mass movement of workers for soviet democracy and social freedom.

Means Replaced Ends

The soviets replaced the workers and their factory committees, the Party replaced the soviets, the Central Committee replaced the Party, and the Political Bureau replaced the Central Committee. In short, means replaced ends.

This incredible substitution of form for content is one of the most characteristic traits of Marxism-Leninism.

There can be no question that the failure of socialist revolutions in Europe after the First World War led to the isolation of the revolution in Russia. The material poverty of Russia,

coupled with the pressure of the surrounding capitalist world, clearly militated against the development of a consistently libertarian, indeed, a socialist society. But by no means was it ordained that Russia had to develop along state capitalist lines; contrary to Lenin's and Trotsky's expectations, the revolution was defeated by internal forces, not by the invasion of armies from abroad.

Had the movement from below restored the initial achievements of the revolution in 1917, a multi-faceted social structure might have developed, based on worker's control of industry, on a freely developing peasant economy in agriculture, and on a living interplay of ideas, programs, and political movements. At the very least, Russia would have not been imprisoned in totalitarian chains and Stalinism would not have poisoned the world revolutionary movement, paving the way



—Clifford Harper agraphia.co.uk/home.html

KEVIN O'TOOLE

In *The Tyranny of Theory*, Ronald Tabor is adamant that anarchists need to hold Marxists accountable for the historical record of Marxist regimes. He writes, “these regimes represent the underlying logic of Marxism, and the efforts of Marxists and Marxist organizations to create revolutionary societies in the future (should they get a chance) will, in all likelihood, lead to similar systems.”

Having worked with the Revolutionary Socialist League before joining the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, Tabor is able to provide us with an inside and outside perspective on Marxist theory and practice.

The book is more than a warning that anarchists should be wary of collaboration with Marxist political organizations. It is

for fascism and World War II.

The centralized party, a completely bourgeois institution, became the refuge of counter-revolution in its most sinister form. This was the covert counter-revolution that draped itself in the red flag and the terminology of Marx. Ultimately, what the Bolsheviks suppressed in 1921 was not an “ideology” or a “White Guard conspiracy,” but an elemental struggle of the Russian people to free themselves of their shackles and take control of their own destiny.

For Russia, this meant the nightmare of Stalinist dictatorship: for the generation of the Thirties it meant the horror of fascism and the treachery of the Communist Parties in Europe and the United States.

Murray Bookchin (1921–2006) was an American anarchist author, historian, and political theoretician.

Throwing Marx Out with the Bathwater?

**The Tyranny of Theory:
A Contribution to the Anarchist
Critique of Marxism**
Ronald D. Tabor
Black Cat Press, 2013
349 pages, \$30.00



also a call for us to develop alternative theoretical frameworks for understanding capitalism. Otherwise, we will continue to find ourselves tacitly supporting regimes and projects that compromise our fundamental principles of liberty, autonomy and voluntary association.

Yet, it is not sufficient to simply dismiss Marxist ideas wholesale. Anarchists (at least some of us) need to directly engage with the theory in order to clearly delineate its limitations and identify what aspects resonate with critics of capitalism and the state with which we share affinity. If anarchists fail to provide better explanations, potential comrades will continue to be drawn to an outdated, contradictory, and ultimately dangerous ideology touted as science.

This is no easy task: Marx developed many sophisticated concepts that have tremendous explanatory power and political appeal. Moreover, many of these concepts are so deeply entrenched in the anti-capitalist narrative that we couldn't dispense with them, even if we wanted to.

For instance, the Marxist theory of exploitation, based on the premise that capitalists extract surplus value from workers by paying them less than what they contribute, is an elegant

and compelling description of the raw deal that is work. The concept of reproductive labor as that portion of labor which is dedicated solely to maintaining the workforce is a powerful starting point for many feminist analyses of household work and the institution of the patriarchal family.

The foundational premise of Marx's historical materialism is that the emergence of class society and the development of social institutions, culture, and ideology, all revolve around the creation and distribution of a material surplus. For anthropologists of all stripes, this remains one of the most popular explanations for the origin and spread of civilization.

In Tabor's words: "Marxism has many features that make it extremely attractive to people angry at the injustices of capitalism. . . it offers a detailed analysis of capitalism that has never been approached. . . in its cogency, breadth and depth. In addition, Marxism provides a moral indictment of the capitalist system, along with a vision of a just society and a strategy and a set of tactics to achieve it.

Finally, it offers a unified conception of history and of human nature and seems to answer all the fundamental questions that have consumed the minds of human beings for millennia."

The primary objective of an anarchist critique of Marxism, then, is to demonstrate that one can utilize some of Marx's ideas and concepts without having to accept his totalizing world-view. Furthermore, it should be able to challenge and redefine the meanings of the concepts that it does find worth retaining. Indeed, this is the basis of critical thinking and it's frustrating that we continuously need to remind Marxists that the process of scientific inquiry is not to develop the correct theory, but to continuously challenge existing theories in order to develop new and better ones.

Tabor's book is an excellent contribution to this critique. He begins by positioning Marxism as a currently vulnerable ideology and stressing the importance of kicking it while it's down. Lacking its once powerful 'material foundation' (the Communist bloc), fewer Marxists are willing to claim the historic inevitability of their vision of communism.

As a result, anarchism has become a major contender, as it was prior to the October Revolution. Tabor sees this as an opportunity to attack Marxism on all fronts. His first task is to demonstrate that the Marxist political program is a fundamentally statist project, calling bullshit on the suggestion that a Dictatorship of the Proletariat, based on the central command of economic and social life, and administered by way of bourgeois coercive institutions, will simply "wither away" once the bourgeoisie has been fully expropriated.

Many anarchists will already be familiar with these arguments and I don't want to spend too much time on them here. One can find much of the theoretical content of these chapters by dusting off old copies of Bakunin or see these predictions borne out in the first-hand accounts of Goldman and Berkman in Bolshevik Russia. Nevertheless, Tabor's synthesis of this information is well worth the read and there are many important nuances that set the stage for the deeper level of

critique in the remainder of his book.

This brings us to the more interesting, and more contentious, claim of this book: "one cannot separate Marx's analytical ideas (his theory) from his practical program and still have Marxism." Such a statement will immediately put many anarcho-communists, syndicalists and council communists on the defensive. It's not polite to pull the theoretical rug from under their feet.

Notwithstanding the appeal (and usefulness) of important concepts such as the ones listed above, Marx's analysis of capitalism is quite simply wrong. Here, Tabor holds Marxists accountable not only for Marxist regimes, but for Marxist economic analysis itself. He demonstrates that Marx had a very clearly defined conception of labor, capital and the "laws of motion of capitalism."

For well over a hundred years, bourgeois and socialist thinkers alike have identified the logical inconsistencies in this theory and demonstrated that capitalism has most definitely not followed the historical trajectory predicted by Marx.

In response to these critiques, many Marxists have twisted his words, turning precise concepts into vague generalizations, claiming that logical fallacies merely reflect the complexities and contradictions of dialectics (much the same way that a Christian would respond to inconsistencies in the bible by claiming that "God works in mysterious ways"). We are told that we cannot take Marx's words at face value, that we cannot possibly understand *Das Kapital* without reading Hegel. Marxism is a complicated hieroglyphics that can only be fully deciphered by the priesthood. Unfortunately, too many anarchists repeat these platitudes.

Tabor provides us with the information and tools to dissect these claims. While arguing with a Trotskyist pamphleteer on these terms will still be frustrating, they will prove quite useful to anarchists who are flirting with Marxist theory in their attempts to find satisfactory explanations for the world in which they live.

In addition to a comprehensive critique of Marx's theory of capital and the state, Tabor also questions the deterministic aspects of the materialist conception of history and provides a philosophical challenge to the notion that Marxism can be considered scientific in the first place.

Unfortunately, the reader is left conflicted by a book that begs us to move beyond Marx, but constantly reminds us that we can't avoid him. Nevertheless, the greatest shortcoming of this book is also one of its greatest appeals: Tabor doesn't give us any easy answers as to what aspects of Marxism should be retained and what aspects should be thrown in the dustbin along with the historical Communist regimes.

In a sense, though, that is indicative of the anarchist antidote to ideology: you're going to have to figure that out for yourself!

Kevin O'Toole is a precarious Montréal educator who helps economics students pass their exams and provides critical alternatives in the process.



will suffice here. This person, who had been well instructed in economics, resolved, when she succeeded to the headship of the clan, to undertake a radical economic cure, and to turn the whole county of Sutherland. . .into a sheepwalk."

Between 1600 and 1850, a broad enclosure of the commons in Europe stripped natives of their hereditary farms. This ended all the ancient *folklaw* rights of common. Lost to us, perhaps forever, were all the commons of betterment, the *estovers* right, at

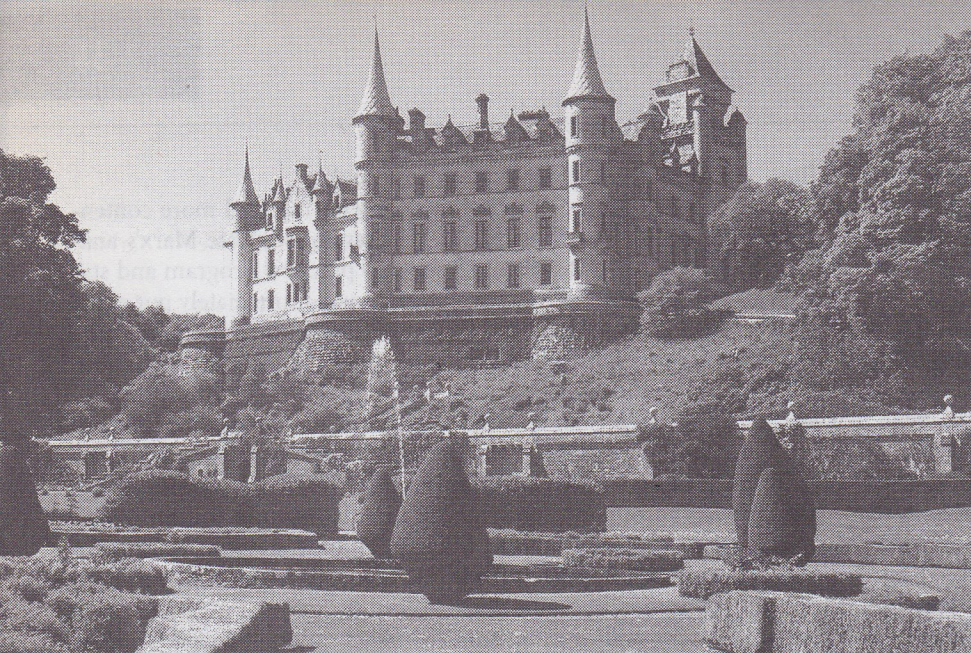
will, to collect from Nature the necessities of survival, called the commons of *houseboot*, *ploughboot*, *crateboot*, *harrowboot*, *stakeboot*, *hedgeboot*, *fireboot* or *turbary*, and the commons of *piscary*, *denes and strands*, *pannage*, *mead-reading* or *dole-mead*, *herbage* or *vesture*, also known as *sweepage*.

These inalienable rights, to be in Nature and take Nature's bounty at will, even from private estates owned by dukes and barons, are so flown out of our legal memory that for most people, and this computer, the words mean nothing (fifteen words above italicized by the computer in red, all once our lawful rights of common).

BETWEEN 1814 AND 1820, the Duchess of Sutherland cleared 3000 families—about 15,000 people—from her estates. All the old villages and farmsteads were destroyed or burned and there were skirmishes, mostly undocumented, between natives and soldiers. One old woman was burnt to death in the flames of the cottage she refused to leave. By 1825, the 15,000 Scottish commoners had been replaced by 131,000 sheep. Land totaling 794,000 acres were made into twenty-nine huge sheep farms each inhabited by a single employed family.

We have three things to be grateful to Karl Marx for: One, was his condemnation of monopolistic oligarchy; another was his condemnation of the enclosure of the commons and the clearings of estates; and the third was the idea that private property is wrong, at odds with the common ownership—*folklaw*—found among native peoples which does not give to the owner incorporeal corporate powers.

The third idea, by the way, that archaic societies had no private property in land, that land was held in common, or collectively, and that only rarely was it held by individuals, contributed greatly to the field of anarcho-primitivism a century later. Friedrich Engels, Marx's collaborator, was fascinated with Lewis Henry Morgan's anthropological studies of American Indians, and produced, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), which grew into a primitivist anthropology exemplified by Richard B. Lee's *Reflections On Primitive Communism* (1965), Stanley Diamond's *In*



Dunrobin Castle, the stately home in Scotland and family seat of the Earl of Sutherland

Marx praised the emerging bourgeoisie for developing capitalist production

How Slick-City-Boy-Karly Got the Country-Folk Killed

JOSEPH WINOGROND

Nature played a big part in the 1960s Revolution, more than just flower-power and communes. Many of us left the city for natural living, for our physical and mental well-being. We sought freedom from a mercantile world of wage-slavery. We read *Mother Earth News*. Gardens were planted; fields were cultivated. New ideas of untainted healthy food flourished together with a new-born environmentalism and deep ecology. The chauvinism of the 1950s was confronted by movements of peace, civil rights, women's rights, environmental rights, consumer rights and so on.

Many of us also read Karl Marx and admired his condemnation of oligarchy and the disenfranchising of commoners in Europe. One of the strongest drawing cards of *Capital* was its depiction of the super-rich Lady Sutherland in Scotland and her hapless peasant population:

"In the 18th century, the (Scottish) Gaels were both driven from the land and forbidden to emigrate, with a view to driving them forcibly to Glasgow and other manufacturing towns. As an example of the method used in the 19th century, the 'clearings' made by the Duchess of Sutherland

Search of the Primitive (1974), Pierre Clastres' *Society Against the State* (1974; *Archaeology of Violence* (1980) and others.

Anarcho-primitivism holds that all agriculturalists were enslaved to farm domestication, that they were neither free nor wild, being slaves to their domestic duties, but many of the natives of rural Europe practiced transhumance migration and collected much of their necessities from the wild. Compared with today's office-workers, European farm families were self-subsistent, had no bosses to report to, lived every day outside in Nature, and were, comparatively speaking, wild as hell.

The point is that Marx's affection for the Sutherland commoner-farmers is contradictory. The political cause of the rural population was a conservative one. They wanted to conserve their culture as it was; not drawn into the developing modern world of factories, mines, and markets which Marx and Engels designated as progressive. This kind of contradiction in terms and values is what can be called "being inside the snake's mouth," where the snake bites its own tail; where polar opposites fuse or suffer reversals. Liberating the working class that capitalism had created was the objective of nineteenth-century socialism. Peasant life was of little interest to Marx who saw its Old Ways as an obstruction to revolution and contemptuously described it as "rural idiocy."

Conservatives saw the movement toward industrial progress and away from traditional agriculture as an uprooting of families that would end their age-old ties to neighbors and kinfolk. To be forced to work in a mill in a city, even if it were safer, was to be absorbed into an anonymous existence of alienation and commercialization. The closeness to Nature that country living represented, the mutual affection and support of family and friends, the more leisurely and contemplative existence of farm life, all would be lost with hectic city living and emergence in industrial production.

Progressive social reformers saw rural life as old-fashioned and authoritarian. They believed that backwards farmers were incapable of the maturity and wisdom that would come with education. A modern critical theory believed it to be necessary to deprovincialize all the peasant-farmers by means of education and enlightenment. Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) contrasted the ignorance of country folk with the urban bourgeoisie.

In *Capital*, Marx depicted the peasant society as an older order that would disappear with historical progress. He saw the peasant family as an unfit economic enterprise, "the most habitually indolent and most irrational type of enterprise imaginable." He saw the French peasants who backed Napoleon III as a barbarian, reactionary class, unlike the modern progressive "rustic who struggles to escape the conditions of his social existence, namely his little plot of land... not the country folk who seek with their own reserves of energy and in alliance with cities to overthrow the old order, but rather the fuzzy-minded ones..."

Engels also blasted the "thick-headed ignorance, blindness...and obtuse stupidity" of farmers, calling them, "barbarians in the midst of civilization."

In the dogmatic *Geneva Manifesto* issued at the 1864 London founding of the International Workingmen's Association of which Marx was a part, large-scale collective farms became a permanent platform of socialist doctrine, stated thusly: "small-scale peasant agriculture is irrevocably and implacably condemned to a gradual death by the omnipotence of capital, the role of science...and the interests of society as a whole."

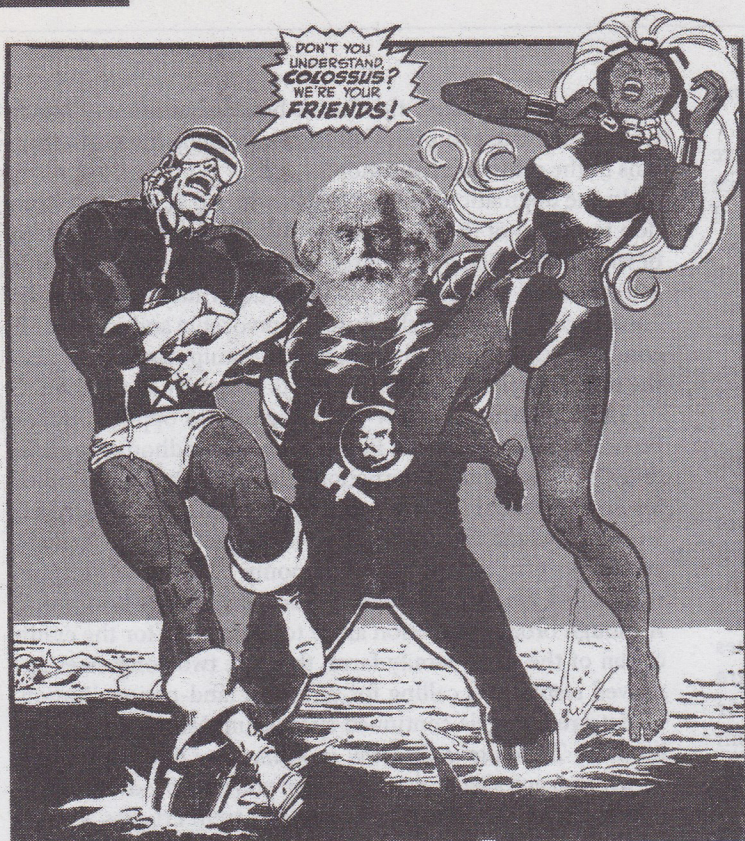
The Marxist anti-family-farm dogma was opposed by the French socialist-anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon at the Second Congress of the International in 1867. Proudhon called for an ideal rural society made up of small peasant farmers working on land that was their own, a philosophy of rural anarchist poverty, autarky, and autonomy. This incensed Marx, who called his former friend Proudhon a "petty bourgeois." Although broad opposition arose to Marx's call for the eradication of the small family farm, the next two congresses approved resolutions calling for universal land-nationalization. Undeterred, Engels continued supporting Marx's position in his 1894 *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*, where he wrote, "capitalist mass production will trample over the impotent, antiquated small farm just as a train crushes a pushcart."

The thrust of 19th century economic and social scholarship and research avoided the subjects of peasants and preindustrial life. Most academic and labor leaders had urban backgrounds. Their research focused on the advances of city life, education, science, industrialism, and collectivism. By the 20th century, increases of large corporate-farm productivity resulted in massive surpluses and accompanying government farm subsidies. Three-quarters or more of all small European independent farms disappeared from the landscape, thanks to corporatism and oligarchy and "progress," not socialism. But in the Soviet Union, because of Marx's early demonization of small farmers, something more dreadful occurred:

Within the Soviet Union, the forced transition to mass scale farming occurred between 1927 and 1932. By the end of the first Five Year Plan, 61 percent of family farms had been collectivized; by 1932 it was 90 percent. Stalin achieved this remarkable transition by hiring itinerant goons, most of rural origins, to round up Kulaks, middle-class farmers who refused to budge from their family land. In the end, Stalin deported and liquidated five million Kulaks who represented one-quarter of the twenty million who died in the vast genocide perpetrated during Stalin's reign.

Thanks a lot, Karl.

Joseph Winogrand is a folklorist who researches primitive life and the eradication of self-subsistent small communities by corporatism. He is a guitarist and folksinger and has been singing folk songs from the Celtic and English traditions since the early 1960s.



A full-length version of this article appeared in the October 1979 FE. The graphic was with the original. It's on our website at <http://fifthestate.org/archive/299-october-22-1979/practical-marx/>

Marx as opportunist & reformist politician

The Practical Marx

JOHN ZERZAN

Karl Marx is always approached as so many thoughts, so many words. What connection is there between lived choices—one's willful lifetime—and the presentation of one's ideas?

By 1846 Marx and Engels had written *The German Ideology*, which contains the full and mature ideas of the materialist concept of the progress of history. Along with this tome were the practical activities in politics. In terms of his Communist Correspondence Committee and its propaganda work, Marx (also in 1846) stated: "There can be no talk at present of achieving communism; the bourgeoisie must first come to the helm."

In June of the same year he sent instructions to supporters to act "jesuitically," to not have "any tiresome moral scruples" about acting for bourgeois hegemony.

The inexorable laws of capitalist development, necessarily involving the sacrifice of generations of "insufficiently developed" proletarians, would bring capital to its full plenitude—and the workers to the depths of enslavement. Thus, in 1847, following a congress of professional economists in Brussels to which he was invited, Marx publicly noted the disastrous effect of free trade upon the working class, and embraced this development.

In a subsequent newspaper article, he likewise found colonialism, with its course of misery and death to be, on the whole, a good thing; like the development of capitalism itself, inevitable and progressive, working toward eventual revolution.

Unprepared for Revolutionary Upheavals

In 1847 the Communist League was formed in London, and at its second Congress later in the year, Marx and Engels were given the task of drafting its manifesto. Despite a few ringing anti-capitalist phrases in its general opening sections, the concrete demands by way of conclusions are gradualist, collaborationist, and highly statist (e.g., for an inheritance tax, graduated income tax, centralization of credit and communications).

Ignoring the incessant fight waged since the mid-18th century and culminating with the Luddites, and unprepared for the revolutionary upheavals that were to shake Europe in less than a year, the *Communist Manifesto* sees, again, only an "insufficiently developed" proletariat.

In April of 1848, Marx went to Germany with the *Manifesto* plus the utterly reformist "Demands of the Communist Party in Germany." The "Demands," also by Marx and Engels, were constituent of a bourgeois revolution, not a socialist one, appealing to many of the elements that directly fought the March outbreak of the revolution.

Considering Marx' position as vice-president of the non-radical Democratic Association in Brussels during the previous year, and, naturally, his support of a prerequisite bourgeois ascendancy, he quickly came into conflict with the revolutionary events of 1848 and with much of the Communist League.

Marx helped found a Democratic Society in Cologne, which ran candidates for the Frankfurt Parliament, and he vigorously opposed any League support for armed intervention in support of the revolutionaries. Using the opportunist rationale of not wanting to see the workers become "isolated," he went so far as to use his "discretionary powers," as a League official, to dissolve it in May as too radical, an embarrassment to his support of bourgeois elements.

With the League out of the way, Marx concentrated his 1848 activities in Germany on support for the Democratic Society and his dictatorial editorship of the

Neue Rheinische Zeitung. In both capacities he pursued a “united front” policy, in which working people would be aligned with all other “democratic forces” against the remnants of feudalism. Of course, this arrangement would afford the workers no autonomy, no freedom of movement; it chose to see no revolutionary possibilities residing with them.

As editor of the NRZ, Marx gave advice to Camphausen, businessman head of the provisional government following the defeat of the proletarian upsurge. And further, astounding as it sounds, he supported the Democratic Society’s newspaper despite the fact that it condemned the June 1848 insurrection of the Paris proletariat. As politician and newspaper editor, Marx was increasingly criticized for his consistent refusal to deal with the specific situation or interests of the working class.

Wars as the Spark of Revolution

By the fall of 1848, the public activities of Marx began to take on a somewhat more activist, pro-worker coloration, as the risings of the workers resumed in Germany. By December, however, disturbances were on the wane, and the volatile year in Germany appeared to be ending with no decisive revolutionary consequences.

Now it was, and only now, that Marx in his paper declared that the working class would have to depend on itself, and not upon the bourgeoisie for a revolution. But because it was rather clearly too late for this, the source of revolution would have to come, he divined, from a foreign external shock: namely, war between France and England, preceded by a renewed French proletarian uprising. Thus, at the beginning of 1849, Marx saw in a Franco-British war the social revolution, just as in early 1848 he had located it in war between Prussia and Russia.

This was not to be the last time, by the way, that Marx saw in the slaughter of national wars the spark of revolution; the worker-as-subject again fails to occur to Marx, that they could act—and did act—on their own initiatives without first having to be sacrificed, by the generation, as factory slaves or cannon fodder.

But from the early 1850s Marx had begun to spend most of his time in studies at the British Museum. From this time, he quickly jettisoned the relative radicality of his new-found militance and foresaw a general prosperity ahead, hence no prospects for revolution. The coincidence of economic crisis with proletarian revolt is, of course, mocked by the real history of our world. From the Luddites to the Commune, France in 1968 to the multitude of struggles opening on the last quarter of the 20th century, insurrection has been its own master.

International Workingman’s Association

The economic crisis Marx avidly awaited in the ‘50s had come and gone in 1857, awakening no revolutionary activity. But by 1863 and the Polish insurrection of that year, unrest was in the air—providing the background for the formation of the international Workingman’s Association. Marx put aside his work on Capital and was most active in the affairs of the International from its London inception in September, 1864.

Marx was elected to the executive committee.

Volumes could be written, and possibly have, on the manipulations of Marx within the International, the maneuverings of places, dates, and lengths of meetings, for example, in the service of securing and centralizing his authority. To the case of the ADAV could be added, among a multitude of others, his cultivation of the wealthy bourgeois Lefort, so as to keep his wholly non-radical faction within the organization. By 1867 his dedicated machinations were felt to have reaped their reward; to Engels he wrote, “we (i.e. you and I) have this powerful machine in our hands.”

Paris Commune

Well-known, of course, is Marx’s negative reception to the rising of the Parisians; it is over-generous to say that he was merely pessimistic about the future of the Commune. Days after the successful insurrection began he failed to applaud its audacity, and satisfied himself with grumbling that “it had no chance for success.” Though he finally recognized the fact of the Commune (and was thereby forced to revise his reformist ideas regarding proletarian use of existing state machinery), his lack of sympathy is amply reflected by the fact that throughout the Commune’s two-month existence, the General Council of the International, spoke not a single word about it.

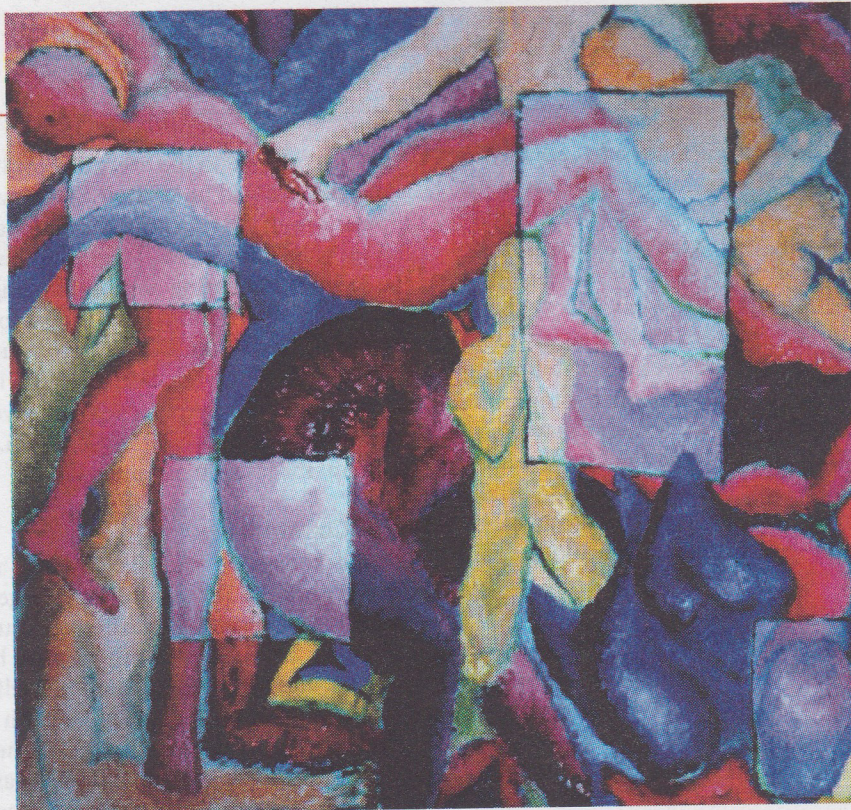


The worker-as-subject again fails to occur to Marx, that they could act—and did act—on their own initiatives without first having to be sacrificed, by the generation, as factory slaves or cannon fodder.

It often escapes notice when an analysis or tribute is delivered well after the living struggle is safely living no longer. The masterful polemicizing about the triumphs of the Commune and Civil War in France constitute an obituary, in just the same way his book, *The Class Struggles in France*, did so at a similarly safe distance from the events he failed to support at the time of revolutionary Paris, 1848.

After a very brief period—again like his public attitude just after the 1848 through 1849 outbreaks in Europe—of stated optimism as to proletarian successes in general, Marx returned to his more usual colors. He denied the support of the International to the scattered summer 1871 uprisings in Italy, Russia, and Spain—countries mainly susceptible to the doctrines of anarchy, by the way. September witnessed the last meeting of the International before the Marx faction effectively disbanded it, rather than accept its domination by more radical elements such as the Bakuninists, in the follow-

Continued on P.44



Lily So-too, *What do they do to you?* (Oil on canvas, 72 X 72 inches 2004)

Under the wall

LILY SO-TOO

Take me to
where my heart is sunken
deep into the land
stepped on, kicked, trampled, thought
nothing of,
to the place where people don't know that
it is even there,
supporting their weight.
Let me love them anyway.

i am not divided from myself
let me feel the ache of the person
struggling to keep alive at the hands of another person
and under a mechanized system
designed to grind her back into stardust
mine is the same body and breath
that give her
material right to be, to exist.

If you cannot hold it, why can you not hold it?
Where in you is the fault line,
where is this heavy break
like you are on one mountain and
the rest of the world is on another mountain?
the fall between the rises, is not fooled.
The land knows it is contiguous, it is one planet,
one biosphere. It does not wonder if you are a part of it,
even if you wonder if you are a part of it.

Were you there when people with guns
kept us from getting food or fluid?
What about when your freedom of movement
through planes and buses and trains and cars and boats and cabs
and all kinds of motorized travel became our inability to
leave a small patch of land as it became swallowed by water?
Were you absent then, in the exchange of unseeable gases,
yours getting you where you want to go and the rest of us,
going where no-one wants to go?

Were you there when the chemicals showered down
making our children's children's children's bodies
with molten limbs like the scars burned into the land,
so that even if we lived, our culture held
the remnants of your choices
like a wound from our own hand to our own hand
we are here still, waiting for you to arrive.

You are always wanting more from the world, always seeking fire,
you will find the last remaining match, here, where you left
us beneath you.

—September 13, 2014

Lily So-too is a Northwest writer, painter, theatre-maker, dancer,
musician, and ardent lover of life. Lily eschews gender pronouns,
loves people, the living earth, birds, trees, and social movements
that involve dancing and mischief.



—Chuck Munson

Fiction

The Fall of Ekset City

Margaret Killjoy

Ekset City was on fire. Flares and napalm and hammers and bullets and the angry minds of angry men were tearing through three hundred years of architecture and three thousand years of culture. At the center of the city, a bonfire engulfed the seven pillars of Ekset. A frightful horde of humans paraded through, warming their hands on the pyre of victory and sacrificing every trace of goblin culture to the consuming flames. Black smoke rose up so thick and high it fought against the glory of the sun.

We watched for a moment from a boardinghouse balcony. Perhaps a moment too long. Every book and painting burned was another failure. There were two of us tasked with the preservation of an entire civilization's worth of art, and an army of men stood in our way.

"Why seven pillars?" I asked. I was the photographer. Micah was the expert.

Micah answered. "Four for the villages and three for the tribes—one for each culture that fled to this purgatory rock. That's what Ekset means, in the most common goblin tongue. It means purgatory. Ekset was a place of waiting. They were waiting for us to leave them alone."

I turned my back on the square and we made our way across a walkway to the building next door.

I snapped high-resolution photos of the walkway and its construction to pair with the livestream of our helmets. A cellular modem in my camera dumped the pictures online as fast as I took them in case we or our cameras didn't make it home.

"The buildings and rooms are interconnected without locks

and often without doors," Micah told me. She was speaking as much to any viewers we might have online as she was to me. "The only private property, inasmuch as that word applies, are each goblin or family's small havens, used for when a goblin desires privacy."

"There's no crime?" I asked.

"There's crime," Micah told me. "But the Eksetians are more... I suppose you could say they're more 'crime tolerant.' Sometimes their things get stolen. Sometimes they steal them back. Sometimes goblins fight—no more than in human society—but a lot of crime, especially property crime, is just, well, accepted. The same way we might accept a head cold."

The next building had yet to be pillaged, and I set about photographing as fast as I could.

"This is a sort of a library," Micah said, moving to the low shelves on the walls and skimming through book titles. "Really, more of a communal bookshelf. It breaks my heart I can't save every book here." She picked out seven books, wrapped them in paper, and thrust them into her pack. I focused on the paintings.

They bore every bit of the breadth of style as you can find in human art—from expressionist to modern to surreal to baroque to classical—but most every piece was nearly three-dimensional with layered paint.

"Shaping the paint with one's claws is every bit as important to the Eksetian artist as color and style and brushwork," Micah said, leaving the books to join in my admiration.

She cut one painting free of its frame, rolled it up, and jammed it into my overfull pack. I'd scarcely noticed the one

she'd chosen—an obese goblin, crudely rendered. Instead, I was lost in a scene of three goblins in the rain, one as tall as a human. The rain was drawn with thick clear gel, leaving the viewer with the impression of staring at the scene through a thick, crudely-made window. The joy on the creatures' faces came across, through the rain and across species lines. I was mesmerized.

The sound of boots came up the stairs.

"Gotta get out," I said.

"No time," Micah said. "Hide the camera." I put it under my coat.

Seven people came into the room. Two had shotguns, one a rifle, and four just bore sledgehammers and crowbars and other things I'd really rather not get hit with. Seven people out of the seven thousand who'd stormed the city and driven out the goblins.

They were in farm clothes and city clothes and outdoorsman clothes and had motorcycle helmets and hardhats and even scraps of sports armor. The blue star of the Human Association was sewn to every jacket. At the sight of them, fear and anger sloshed around in my head, but the practiced dispassion of years of war journalism won out.

"Afternoon," I said, and I bent down and tore books off the shelf at random, casting them to the ground.

Neither of us wore the blue star, but Micah took my lead with the books and they must have bought the ruse, because they tromped back down the stairs as loudly as they'd come.

Micah found a laptop somewhere, and I turned to her just in time to see her bring it down on the edge of the cabinet, cracking its case.

"They already left," I told her.

But she reached into the guts of the smashed machine and pocketed the hard drive.

"Gold," she said. "There might only be a few hundred computers in the city. We're lucky we found one."

"Goblins use technology?" I asked. I'd taken the assignment on a gut feeling alone. I'd never even seen a goblin, but I bore them no ill will. Being tasked to help the refugees preserve their culture, well, it just felt right. But I didn't know much about them—I'd assumed them primitive.

"Goblins use computers the way people use fireplaces," Micah told me. "They understand them, they just only use them for cute aesthetics or when nothing else is working."

We left the building, down into the street. People were swarming over the quarter, dragging every bit of flammable culture towards the fire and smashing the rest as best they could. We kept our heads down, moved along the grand boulevard as quick as we could. Our packs were full, our batteries almost dead.

"How'd it start?" I asked.

Micah turned and made eye contact first with me, then the camera embedded in my helmet. "The same as it ever has. Goblins lived here because they had nowhere else left. Humans drove them up to perch on the ridge of a mountain—not an epic mountain, not a tall mountain, but an ugly one, a squat one. A goblin mountain, I suppose. They moved to

an ugly mountain in an ugly scrubland, gambling humanity would leave them alone. It worked, even. But this place can't support much of a population. A few young goblins started moving into human cities. There was a fight. I don't know who started it. A human kid named Florian Simms and a goblin kid named Thik-thak both wound up dead. Human Association put Florian's face on every news site in the country and here we are."

"And the Eksetians?" I asked. I knew she'd been in contact with them.

"In the woods. Out to sea. Underground. Scattered to every wind, chasing rumors of other goblin cities and towns and tribes. My contacts went underground to ancient vaults a hundred miles from here. And that's where this stuff is going to go." She adjusted her pack. She was hauling at least her own weight. "Come on. One more stop and then we'll get out of here."

We turned a corner, bent under a goblin-height arch, and came out into a hidden courtyard. Ahead of us was rubble, the blasted-out ruins of some great structure.

"I wish I could kill every person who's ever worn the blue star," Micah said, looking at the mess before us.

"What was it?"

"An orphanage, you could say. A kind of communal foster care home and a temple rolled into one. Goblins revere difference where we revile it—near as I can tell, that explains the incredible morphological variation found in such a small population. Huge ears? What a stud. No nose? No problem. Orphans in particular were special, even kind of popular. And growing up here as a human, well, I couldn't have asked for a better life."

We stood in silent respect for too long. We drew too much attention to ourselves, and a handful of armed humans stood watching.

With wary eyes and a few guns aimed at our backs, we walked to the edge of the city and drove away.

"What will you do now?" I asked as we sped off across the scrubland.

She didn't answer.

Three weeks later, mixed forces retook the city from the militia. Helpless, hundreds of miles away, I watched Micah's livestream. Another week still, and a coalition of human governments bombed the city into ruin. Micah died in the city she'd lived in.

Sometimes at night I lose myself in a print of that painting, of those happy creatures in the rain, and I forget I'm only supposed to hate human society and not the human race.

Margaret Killjoy is an itinerant anarchist writer currently based in the Pacific Northwest. They are the author of the utopian novel, *A Country of Ghosts*, the adventure-of-your-own-choosing novel, *What Lies Beneath the Clock Tower*, and a several other books from Combustion Books and AK Press.



Sylvia Federici's Critique of Marx

WOMEN: Marx's Forgotten Proletariat

DAVID ADAMS

While Marx developed some important tools for building a critique of capitalism from the perspective of the worker, he did not devote much thought to capital's exploitation of women.

In *Caliban and the Witch*, Silvia Federici critically revisits the transition from feudalism to capitalism, the historical analysis of which plays a significant role in *Capital*.

Her focus is on the process of Marx's concept of "primitive accumulation," the origin of capital, which entailed, she writes, "an immense accumulation of labor-power—'dead labor' in the form of stolen goods, and 'living labor' in the form of human beings made available for exploitation—realized on a scale never before matched in the course of history."

She addresses specifically how "we do not find in [Marx's] work any mention of the profound transformations that capitalism introduced in the reproduction of labor-power and the social position of women," and the crucial role of women in the shift to a capitalist mode of production.

Primitive accumulation entails the violently-enforced destruction of certain ways of life in order for an elite social strata to gather together previously unavailable material resources necessary for capitalization. Basically, before you can force people to work for you, you have to steal their means of providing their own subsistence and make them dependent on the work you offer them (or else you just enslave them).

Instead of living off of the land as peasants did, the earliest factory workers

were paid a subsistence wage; the lowest wage possible with which the workers could survive and return to work the next day. Even so, this was often not enough to meet the needs of the workers and their families.

But the subsistence wage is not the only determinant factor in a worker's ability to labor, and the value created

slums, it neglects the process of subjugation by which women were simultaneously reduced to their reproductive capacities and then harnessed as breeding stock for bodies whose labor-power could be consumed by capital. It is a simple fact that workers must be born and raised in order to toil.

This reality did not escape early capitalists in the post-plague era, when shortages of labor were common throughout Europe.

Across the continent, during and after the "peak of the demographic and economic crisis" in the 1620s and 1630s, "a population crisis, an expansionist population theory, and the introduction of policies promoting population growth" developed.

Federici points out how this "required the transformation of the body into a work-machine, and the subjugation of women to the reproduction of the work-force."



Women Workers in Bush Terminal, Brooklyn, c. 1944

by workers is not the only value stolen. Marx mentions briefly the extermination of indigenous peoples in the Americas and the initiation of the transatlantic slave-trade, both foundational appropriations of value in the forms of dead and living labor.

Yet these are clearly marginalized details in *Capital*, remaining secondary to the creation of the European proletariat. For Marx, primitive accumulation occurs primarily through the separation of peasants from their land and the commons and their subsequent transformation into a male, industrial working class. This class becomes an historical protagonist, playing the central role in the development of capitalism as the object of exploitation and locus of all truly revolutionary potential.

While the traditional Marxist analysis leans heavily on the violent struggle to displace the peasantry and funnel potential labor-power into growing urban

Since the reproduction of labor-power encompasses not only pregnancy, birth, and the rearing of children, but sexual activity itself, "new disciplinary methods" were adopted by the state to "regulate procreation and break women's control over reproduction" during The General Crisis of the 17th and 18th centuries.

In effect, controlling the bodies and sexual activity of women became instrumental in breeding a workforce large enough that labor-power could be had at rock-bottom prices, in order to ensure the continuation of exploitation and profitable development of early capitalism.

Capital's main methods for accomplishing this in Europe were the "extermination of the 'witches'" and the ensuing transformation of the family, which "emerges in the period of primitive ac-

cumulation also as the most important institution for the appropriation and concealment of women's labor."

The witch-hunt "literally demonized any form of birth-control and non-procreative sexuality, while charging women with sacrificing children to the devil," ultimately destroying "a whole world of female practices, collective relations, and systems of knowledge that had been the foundation of women's power in pre-capitalist Europe." Simultaneously, the family became the site of a "new 'sexual contract'" which defined women in terms like "mothers, wives, daughters, [and] widows" that "hid their status as workers while giving men free access to women's bodies, their labor, and the bodies and labor of their children."

Women were forced to conform to a "new model of femininity. . . passive, obedient, thrifty, of few words, always busy at work, and chaste." This violent rearrangement resulted in the expansion of the "unpaid part of the working day" whereby capital used "the (male) wage to accumulate women's labor."

It is easier to exploit workers when there is someone taking care of them. It is difficult to run a business when one's workers are naked, starving, sleep-deprived, and socially isolated; it is equally undesirable to spend valuable capital providing for these basic human needs beyond the lowest possible wage. There is no better way to externalize the costs of labor's upkeep than breaking social life into public and private spheres.

In the private sphere, subordinated women's labor—cooking, cleaning, mending, providing a psychological outlet (via sex, violence, and emotional caretaking), meanwhile raising the next generation of workers—can be exploited, while capital reaps the rewards. The result is that "in the new capitalist regime *women themselves became the commons*, as their work was defined as a natural resource, laying outside the sphere of market relations."

Though capitalism has often been identified by orthodox Marxists as an advanced stage in the progress of humanity

and the necessary precursor to a more just society, this is a gross error based on a fundamental oversight. Capitalism, in unleashing productive powers on an inhuman scale, has "created more brutal and insidious forms of enslavement."

Marx's silence concerning the production and reproduction of the "waged male proletariat" is an historical and economic exclusion—in effect, a political exclusion. He ignored the "*accumulation of differences and divisions within the working class*, whereby hierarchies built upon gender, as well as 'race' and age, became constitutive of class rule and the formation of the modern proletariat."

By focusing too much on the intensive capitalist policy of a "totalitarian regime using every means to extract the maximum of work from every individual," he neglected completely the extensive policy, enacted with complicity and material assistance from the state, "consisting in the effort to expand the size of population, and thereby the size of the army and the work-force." This has resulted in silencing women's historical experience of subordination—the appropriation of women's bodies and the theft of women's labor *necessary for the development of capitalism*.

Today, Marx's omission continues to haunt us. Women's voices and thus their experiences continue to be silenced in the struggle against domination, which is not only capitalist, but patriarchal. One of his great mistakes was to never acknowledge "that procreation could become a terrain of exploitation and by the same token a terrain of resistance."

Marx never imagined that women could refuse to reproduce, or that such a refusal could become part of class struggle." Excluding a liberatory feminist perspective that takes into account the historical reality of women's subjugation to a male-dominated economic order, any idea of revolution becomes reactionary and false.

Marxists would do well to re-assess their obsession with the male working-class as the sole site of revolutionary potential.

David Adams is a scholar, critic, and poet, who hates capitalism, but loves squirrels. He composes communiqués in an underground jungle bungalow, hurtling ceaselessly through spacetime somewhere in continental Europe. He casts a funky shadow at nationtimesyndrome.com.

city as host of the upcoming Republican National Convention (and a probable Ronald Reagan presidency), a vague desperation overtook me, to search for alternatives, first on the radio and then in the press.

This meant turning the knobs between college and rock FM radio while scanning the pages of Detroit's *Creem* magazine and the *Fifth Estate*, the *Village Voice*, or Michael Moore's *Michigan Voice*, anxiously yearning for the sound of something beyond formula rock playlists. Something relevant, rebellious, and astonishing. Within my late teenage isolation, a restless anticipation swelled for punk rock from England, particularly from one group

A Brief Story of The Clash, Radio & the Fifth Estate

**Stealing All Transmissions: The Secret History of
The Clash**

Randal Doane, Foreword by Barry "The Baker" Auguste,
2014, PM Press, 192pp, \$15.95 pmpress.org

BILL BLANK

In December 1979, after stumbling through my first trimester at Michigan State University, I took the allotted three weeks off in suburban Detroit. While the media began priming the struggling

known as The Clash.

The initial song, "London Calling," from their double album by the same name (released January 1980 in the US), would always jump from the speaker, with the snarling lead singer, Joe Strummer, introducing a still refreshing stance; "London Calling/Now don't look at us/Phony Beatlemania has bitten the dust."

In *Stealing All Transmissions*, author (and assistant dean at Oberlin College) Randal Doane tries to capture this unique, roughly three-year historical moment (1979-82) when The Clash, aided by an excited alternative press and select key radio support, led a second British invasion of high-energy rock and roll, one often infused with explicit left-wing politics.

As proclaimed by the late bandleader Strummer, "We're anti-fascist, anti-violence, we're anti-racist and pro-creative. We're against ignorance."

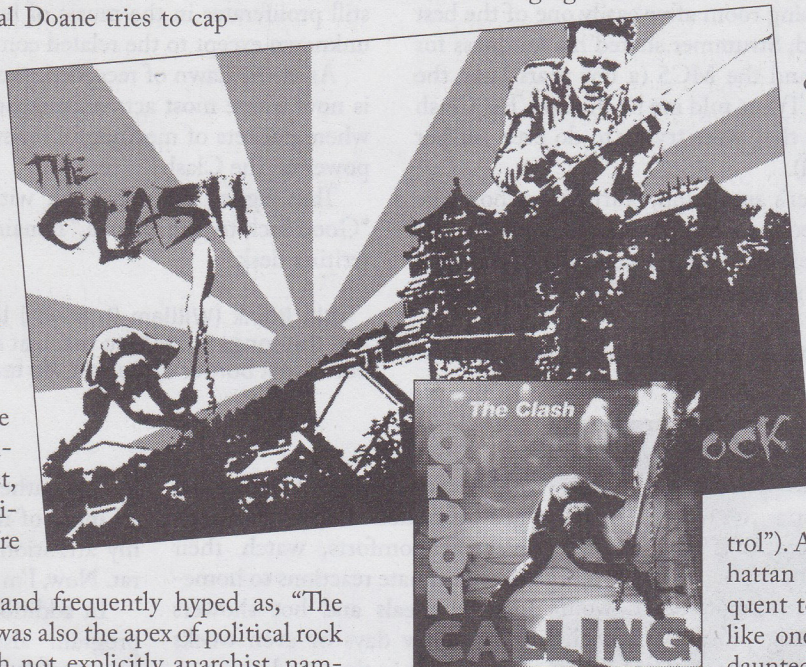
More succinctly, the band frequently hyped as, "The Only Band That Matters," was also the apex of political rock or protest music. Although not explicitly anarchist, naming one of their albums after the left nationalist Nicaraguan Sandinistas and making catchy power chord statements about the Spanish Civil War (not Revolution, as anarchists define it) in "Spanish Bombs," or how capitalism creates the obedience required for submission to daily life in "Clamp-down," are samples of how unusually subversive The Clash were at the time – and how timeless they remain.

A partial list of just some of the more well-known anarchist bands heavily influenced by The Clash could include Anti-Flag, Chumbawamba, Citizen Fish, Crass (where singer Steve Ignorant took up Strummer's challenge to form a better band), the Dead Kennedys, DOA, MDC, The Minutemen (with homage in "History Lesson Part II"), Poison Girls and, most recently, Pussy Riot. Yet even the most popular socially conscious leftist descendants, such as Billy Bragg, Rage Against the Machine, or Public Enemy, never equaled the impact of The Clash. It's notable that the first Clash album, containing accelerated proto-punk screamers like "I'm So Bored with the USA" and "White Riot," remains the all-time best selling import in the US, eclipsing any Beatles LP.

Doane's book oddly devotes much of its focus on the late 1970s New York alternative airwaves, chiefly the liberal WNEW-FM, and the even more free-form WPIC-FM, where rebellious DJs (and some more veteran rockers like Lou Reed) enjoyed a tenuous relationship with the under-

ground sounds contrasting the more expensively produced, corporate rock dominating mainstream press, radio, and profits.

Aging East Coasters might treasure the author's detailed reminiscing, such as how Strummer openly made fun of corporate rock by the Eagles, Steely Dan, and Ted Nugent as early as 1979 (revealing some of the band's more subtle humor), but such memory detours overstate Doane's thesis on the converging forces of rock promotion.



Nationally, commercial radio (and even some major college outlets) would soon become more corporatized, with content and airtime regulated down to the minute (and eventually down to the seconds). Bands like The Clash benefited greatly from these last gasps of marketable freedom (even mockingly embraced in "Complete Control").

As they conquered Manhattan and America in subsequent tours, The Clash seemed like one of the few bands undaunted by fans or rivals crying "sell-out," as they retained the

intense live performance as the lifeblood of their existence.

Doane spends four pages explaining the iconic photo of the *London Calling* LP cover, but neglects the main story of how a truly amazing agitprop band deserved such a large and enthusiastic following.

A more thorough and insightful explanation of The Clash can better be found on film, with the underrated 2007 documentary *Joe Strummer: The Future Is Unwritten*, directed by Julien Temple. That visual and audio summary of a generation's lost spokesman in the vein of Bob Dylan, John Lennon, and Woody Guthrie comes through in electric Clash footage, and rare Strummer interviews. The ever-active Strummer died way too young at 50 of an undetected heart ailment in 2002.

The Clash, despite its inherent contradictions as a major label (Columbia) rock 'n' roll band, remains a bridge to more radical politics for many, not just for their music and lyrics, but also to their sense of timing and urgency.

Despite the typical rock star idolatry and post-Lennon assassination fears, The Clash kept trying to reduce the distance between performer and audience, including frequently inviting audiences to join them onstage at some point during their legendary shows, much to the dismay of security personnel. Strummer and the band routinely made sure interested fans could meet up with them after the show in their dressing

room or outside their tour bus to continue the dialogue (this openness once cost them some stolen equipment at a show in East Lansing, Mich.).

On a magical summer night in Detroit's Grand Circus Theater, I eagerly caught The Clash at the peak of their commercial success, when their only Top Ten hit, "Rock the Casbah," could be heard all over pop and rock radio not many months before the band began to implode.

In their sweaty dressing room after easily one of the best concerts I ever attended, Strummer shared his fondness for Motown, the Stooges and the MC5 (a few years later, the MC5's lead singer, Rob Tyner, told me he thought The Clash impressively took what they were trying to do even further than the MC5 ever had).

I asked for Strummer's autograph, blurting out how The Clash that night inspired me to drop out of college and pursue my own dream. Before I could specifically declare my aspirations, Strummer simply asked, "What's the name of your band?"

Soon, I would determinedly embark on a worthwhile ten-

year hiatus from college, where I kept trying to link the energetic protest rock of my band to literature tables dominated by *Fifth Estate* back issues we set at the rear of smoky bars and dark venues where we played (with a Clash cover or two often breaking up our song list of originals).

In this new age of atomized, digitized music, where the internet dispenses and diffuses millions of songs disconnected from any real political movement, the resilience of live music still proliferates in the music of hundreds of anarchist bands unknown except to the related communities.

As at the dawn of recorded music, the stage and the street is now where most acts once again make their impact – and where pockets of meaningful resistance continue to echo the power of The Clash.

That signed address book with Joe Strummer wishing, "Good luck to The Blanks," remains in the top drawer of my writing desk.

Bill Blank (William R. Boyer) left the drums, keyboards, and the songs in 1999 to teach at a public high school on the northwest border of Detroit. He teaches there still.



Thorn, from an episode of the National Geographic show, "Live Free or Die."

Primitivism on TV! Live TV or Die

Live Free or Die
National Geographic Cable Channel

ANDREW SMITH

While I love the peace and challenges of backwoods camping, I admit that I don't engage with them that often, and when I have, the thin lines between adventure and annoyance, between serenity and boredom, barely exist.

If you want to see a person with an

intellectual critique of civilization get infatuated with civilization's creature comforts, watch their most intimate reactions to home-cooked meals and hot showers after a few days or even weeks roughing it in the woods.

The rewilding movement—which has developed primitive survival skills into an artful science and has some popularity and support among green anarchists, anarcho-primitivists, and doomsday collapsists—is the topic of a new reality program on the National Geographic Channel.

The show's title, "Live Free or Die," copies the official New Hampshire state motto, but also sounds reminiscent of the name of an old Earth First! newspaper zine from the 80s and 90s—*Live Wild or Die*.

Upon first learning of the show, I romantically recalled those friends and comrades I've met over the years who have learned similar skills. I can hike, pitch a tent, filter water, forage very little. Building shelters with primitive tools and hunting prey that I could prepare into an edible meal are beyond my meager survival skills.

Watching the show's dreadlocked

hunter-gatherers do their thing cultivated more of my admiration than it held my attention. Now, I'm going to kill a rat. Now, I'm going to eat a rat. Yum.

In addition to nomadic hunters, the program also features quasi-primitive homesteaders. The intricacies of living a somewhat settled sedentary existence without making much of an impact, without buying food at the store or having a well or spring for water, these are perhaps more painful to witness as a TV consumer than to practice. While the rugged rejection and spartan survivalism of the nomadic hunter portrayed here make some sense to me sociologically and psychologically, I found peering into the lives of the homesteaders painful. The enterprise appears haphazard and tedious at best, with the boundaries of being sedentary strong, but with none of the benefits of modern living to help beat the boredom. As a former homesteader, I feel their pain.

For the subjects of the show, or stars, if you will, rewilding is presented as an all-encompassing lifestyle and not just a hobby, avocation, or skillshare for the future collapse. Admittedly, I only checked out a handful of episodes and browsed the program's website, but in this perusal, I got no sense of these individuals

feeling connected to larger ideas or any motivating genius as felt in the writings of the primitivist philosophers. Thus, the absence of any ideology or philosophy being portrayed in the short interview segments shocked me. However, after only a few minutes of viewing, I “got” the point of the whole program and had to force myself to stick with the storylines of these pioneers for a full 60-minute encounter.

My initial impressions of the rewilding movement—whether among friends practicing it or in the anti-authoritarian or deep green media—always included a more-than-implied critique. That is, the people who learned such skills and practiced such lifestyles did so out of a profound personal commitment and worldview concerning the imminent collapse of industrial society and the moral failures of human communities to create sustainable, ethical relationships. For the average viewers of “Live Free Or Die,” it would be possible to view rewilding merely as a romantic fancy, a privatistic piety, and oddball fetish.

At least among urban deep ecologists, the many movements for greening, gardening, and land reclamation carry with them a commitment to, and engagement with, everyday life in community and experiments in horizontal social structures.

As I survey the array of National Geographic programs, rugged primitives have their fair share of the spotlight, along with monsters and UFOs. During my days as a “lifestyle an-

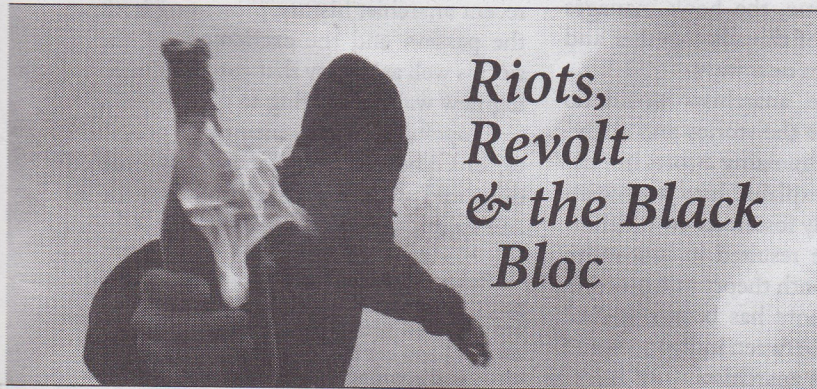
archist” (as the late Murray Bookchin contemptuously labeled primitivists and homesteaders), I took pains to playfully talk back to the sober assessments we often heard from our more conservative (at least in terms of lifestyle) elders and peers.

Now that I am older and more conservative (a strange but handy term to deploy in this context), I confess, I at least now comprehend what the so-called “social anarchists” (the class struggle guys in Bookchin’s language) were so upset about. One could say that this former lifestyle liberationist is now more of a collectivist comrade.

For individualist rewilding, I found the recent film, “Wild,” starring Reese Witherspoon and based on Cheryl Strayed’s memoir of a woman’s 1100-mile solo hike to be a narrative of much more integrity than anything I could glean from this reality program.

As far as I can discern in hindsight, for the social anarchist, it’s all about us. For the lifestyle anarchist, it’s all about me. As television, “Live Free or Die” embodies a spooky media fascination with individualistic rebellion and privatized primitivism. Collective liberation isn’t even on the cable menu, no matter how many channels we get.

Andrew Smith is a former FE editor and once was the self-described “lifestyle anarchist” known as Sunfrog. He lives, writes, and teaches in a Tennessee college town.



I Saw Fire: Reflections on Riots, Revolt and the Black Bloc

Doug Gilbert

Institute for Experimental Freedom,
2014, \$10. 204pp. littleblackcart.com

RUHE

I’ve often found myself frustrated by the lack of worthwhile media projects that accurately capture how anarchists struggle. Doug Gilbert’s *I Saw Fire: Reflections on Riots, Revolt and the Black Bloc* is the kind of book that you

can hand to people encountering anarchist resistance for the first time.

Gilbert, a California East Bay writer and photographer, informed by several years of participation in a variety of radical efforts, manages to explain what is so exciting about recent anarchist endeavors and why they are so much more seductive than outdated models of party and organization building. Most importantly, the book is written in an inviting way that isn’t afraid to use humor and brutal honesty to make a point—a welcome de-

parture from a lot of anarchist writing.

The book offers a thorough critique of much of the history of radical activism in this country, challenging both the actual history and the myths that are told about it. It opens with “Lies the Movement Told Me,” which offers an accessible indictment of history that the Left tells about how change happens.

Gilbert challenges the idea that only formalized groups (political parties, non-profits, unions, activist groups, etc.) can create change and that violence (“defined as any disruptive action coming outside of formalized groups”) is counter-productive. Two prominent examples invoked by Leftists in support of this idea, the labor movement of the 1930s and the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, are examined, with the author arguing that formal organizations grew out of the struggles as a way of containing and limiting them.

Organizations limited the self-organized activity and disruption that gave rise to the struggles in the first place. Consequently, instead of the standard view that formal groups force the state

to respond to the demands of the movement, Gilbert asserts that collective action “spurs the State to grant concessions as a way of containing unrest.”

The actions of formal organizations often collude with the state in that they receive various benefits—official recognition of their union perhaps—in exchange for helping to contain struggles. Thus, revolutionaries are forced to consider the question of how we navigate a terrain in which revolt is blocked not only by the state, but formal organizations as well.

This discussion doesn't simply exist in the realm of ideas or history, but is born out of experiences in struggle. Gilbert shares stories from innovative approaches to challenging Nazis and white supremacists in Arizona, from Occupy Oakland, the 2009 California student strikes, and even workplace unions (Gilbert works as a bus driver).

This is what really gives *I Saw Fire* its teeth. The efforts portrayed show exactly how the dynamics discussed play out in the real world. When random people join in the excitement of a riot and seemingly have an instinctive reason for revolting, Leftist groups, whether they be non-profits, party building groups, or unions, step in to steer the struggle elsewhere.

When people seize property, whether at a university or in a public square, liberals are standing by to try sidetrack the discussion towards the importance of “free speech” rather than the larger question of what a free society would look like.

In relation to the Occupy phenom-

non, Gilbert argues that while Occupy was very important in many ways (for example, its emphasis on self-organization and unwillingness to make demands), it failed to break through the stranglehold of the Left which is why it ended as it did.

However, Gilbert is optimistic that Occupy did show that to some degree people know traditional tactics aren't working and that self-organized activity will be the basis of new struggles.

The formal organizations of the Left make only brief appearances in the book, as examples of groups trying to limit anti-police rioting or student organizations trying to stop autonomous militant actions undertaken on campuses.

If the book has one drawback, it's that the text itself might not be that exciting for readers that have been involved in the anarchist space for a longer amount of time. Much of the discussion may seem like old news, but at the same time, the book manages to weave a lot of threads together and presents them in new ways.

For example, anarchists would do well to consider the stories and analysis offered of organizing efforts in Arizona. Gilbert explains how anarchists have deliberately fostered new relationships that have resulted in innovative approaches to both theory and practice. Of particular note has been the connections made between indigenous and non-indigenous anarchists.

One result is the DO@ Bloc (Diné,

O'dham, and anarchist) which has brought militant, anti-colonial, and anti-capitalist politics into the debate over immigration.

Even the perennial debate about violence versus non-violence is given a new treatment, with a more sophisticated discussion and consideration of how it fits into larger conversations about containment and counter-insurgency.

It also refreshingly moves beyond the simple fetishization of the riot or the revolt as the penultimate moment in anarchist struggle, with Gilbert asserting that the relationships we form, especially with those outside of the anarchist space, are particularly important as we learn to talk to each other and experience new ways of relating. In sum, the work we do between moments of high conflict may be just as, if not more, important as those moments in the thick of it.

Still, the primary beneficiary of this book may be those newer to anarchist approaches. It's a great introduction to recent anarchist history, presenting both the passion and the excitement of the riot, as well as the joy that comes in finding new ways of relating to each other.

Hopefully, it will encourage people to, as Gilbert puts it, “break down the door and walk through into the wide and frightening world of open revolt.”

Ruhe is an anarchist living in the occupied territory currently known as Michigan. They are involved with Sprout Distro (sproutdistro.com) and are interested in how anarchist ideas and approaches can be communicated to people beyond the narrow subculture.

The Practical Marx

Continued from P.35

ing year. The bourgeois gradualism of Marx was much in evidence at the fall 1871 London Conference, then, as exemplified by such remarks as: “To get workers into parliament is equivalent to a victory over the governments, but one must choose the right man.”

In 1874, he wrote, “The general situation of Europe is such that it moves to a general European war. We must go through this war before we can think of any decisive external effectiveness of the European working class.” Looking, as ever, to

externalities—and of course to the “immutable laws of history”—he contributes to the legacy of the millions of World War 1 dead, sacrificed by the capitulation of the Marxist parties to the support of war in 1914.

Refusing throughout his lifetime to see the possibilities of real class struggle, to understand the reality of the living negation of capitalism, Marx actively and concretely worked for the progress and fullness of capitalist development, which prescribed that generations would have to be sacrificed to it.

John Zerzan, a contributor to the FE since the late 1970s, hosts “AnarchyRadio,” Tuesdays, 7:00pm, PST, and streams at KWVA 88.1 in Eugene, Oregon. His web site is johnzerzan.net. John



Loukanikos, the riot dog, knew who were the enemies of his friends

Shorts *Continued from P. 3*

protests in 2012.

According to *Avgi* journalist, Petros Katsakos, the dog's health was adversely affected by tear gas and from being kicked by police, forcing him to leave active protests.

He swapped tear gas and riot shields for a gentler life with an Athens family, who offered "all the care, love, food and vaccinations" a dog could need.

A tuneup tribute to Loukanikos can be seen in singer/songwriter David Rovics' animated video at youtube.com/watch?v=bR_97V59LbE.

A SUCCESSFUL KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN to raise funds for a documentary on the life of radical psychologist Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957) has allowed production to begin on the film.

Reich's 1933, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, heavily influenced many early *Fifth Estate* staffers.

Not an anarchist, but Austrian-born Reich's analysis of authoritarian personalities is key to understanding the mass psychology of submission to authority of any ideology.

His books were so threatening to the medical and political establishments that they were banned and burned by the U.S. government in 1956 and 1960. Reich died in a Federal penitentiary in 1957 following his refusal to stop circulating his works.

The Kickstarter video is a good preview of what to expect from the film. Google "Wilhelm Reich Film Project" for it.

The latest writing in our mag on

Reich is the 2010, "A Radicalization of Reich: Sexual Repression & The Roots of Authoritarianism," by Patrick Dunn at fifthestate.org/archive/383-summer-2010/radicalization-reich.

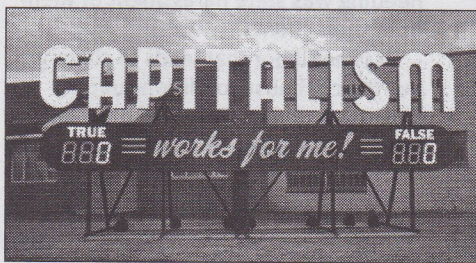
TAKE THIS PUTIN! The Moscow publishing cooperative, Radical Theory & Practice, is translating Emma Goldman's autobiography,

Living My Life, into Russian. The 993-page memoir of a woman whose life intersected with the great events of her era, was published in two volumes in English in 1931 and 1934.

It's a wonderful account of a fully lived life (1869-1940) of someone who fought tirelessly for anarchism, women's rights, sexual freedom, and civil liberties in an era where such struggles could land you in prison (and, did with her).

The publishers expect to find an audience not only in Russia, but also in other countries with Russian readers such as Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia.

Financing is critical for the completion of this project. If you can help, contact our Russian comrades at rtp@riseup.net.



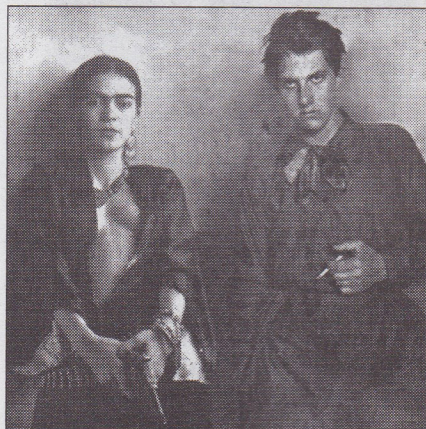
We'll vote "False" on this one

SOMETIMES IT'S WORTH VOTING. In the Summer of 2011, artist Steve Lambert began a national tour of "Capitalism Works For Me! True/False" – a 9 x 20ft sign asking people to vote on the system that is supposedly to be above challenge. He's been taking the sign around the country including a stint in New York City's Times Square.

Lambert's site at visitsteve.com/ doesn't provide results, but he emailed

us saying, "I don't have a current total. Honestly, after a few months I lost interest in the numbers."

"The vote and total works," he wrote, "like a trap to draw people in. The numbers don't actually represent what they think, the part they feel compelled to speak about when given only a true/false choice. Capitalism did well in Iowa, but lost in Times Square, but often is too close to be especially meaningful."



Frida Kahlo & Vladimir Mayakovsky. NOT!

AH, THE FANTASIES famous people engender. The photo above is of Mexican painter, Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), known for her self-portraits, Surrealism, magic realism, and her tempestuous marriage to muralist, Diego Rivera, and Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930) Russian poet, playwright, and exponent of early-20th century Russian Futurism. It is probably almost swoon-inducing to some.

Unfortunately, the story here is that the photo, which is making the rounds on the internet, is a complete fake. In fact, a double fake since the two never met and instead were first Photoshopped together by an on-line photographer, who then placed Frida's head on another body.

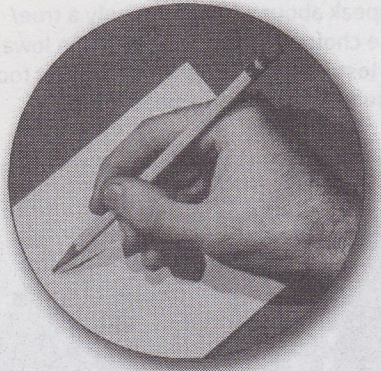
Technology has eliminated the 20th century adage that, "one picture is worth a thousand words."

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Letters

Continued from Page 2



authoritarian insights of prostitution survivors such as Rebecca Mott and Andrea Dworkin.

Instead, a mini-theatre of factoids, straw men and soliloquy, reminiscent of The Playboy Philosophy. Not an honest word about the feminist, anti-racist and anti-poverty advocacy brought to bear on Canadian and French parliamentarians and populations, after a similar process in Nordic countries.

A former stripper, Tennis Milk, recently gave her impression of the faux intellectuals who went on and on about their solidarity with her:

"Something I noticed when I was stripping was that the younger, 'hipper,' generally white patrons I came into contact with were by far the most vested in the whole 'emotionally invasive performance of enthusiastic consent' thing. They all wanted to hear how I was doing it because I was empowered"

"I am entirely convinced that men only care about women being 'empowered' by things like sex work because it's easier on their ego as consumers, not because they give a shit about our wellbeing. Sex positive feminism is a dream come true for these men. All the benefits of exploiting women as sexual commodities without any guilt or stigma for being a creepy ass john."

Martin Dufresne
Montreal

Thaddeus Blanchette responds: I am not aware of sex workers who support the Nordic model. I do know people who claim to be survivors who support it. The two groups are different.

Sex workers are actually, currently selling sex and their voices need to be primary in this debate. The vast majority of these people are not helpless, agencyless victims who need rescuers.

Survivors are generally people who've been through processes analogous to slavery, not sex work.

Dworkin herself is an example. She did not work as a prostitute. She engaged in transactional survival sex while escaping an abusive marriage.

Curiously, however, we don't see people calling for "models" that criminalize marriage and arrest spouses, for all that certain anarcho-feminists claim to be anti-marriage.

In fact, Dworkin herself married again, making use of the privileges granted to such "respectable" sexual/affective unions. So much for ideological purity.

My opposition to the Nordic Model is not based on theory, but on discussions with hundreds of sex workers. What every one of them emphatically denied needing was state harassment of them or of their clients.

It is not labor that leads to slavery, but the capitalist conditions under which it is undertaken. These conditions are always worsened by criminalization. State-led initiatives (such as the Nordic model) do not attack slavery, nor do they reduce sex work: they *have* led to an increase in anti-immigrant policing and racial profiling, however. They have also made life much more precarious for the many people who sell sex.

Finally, I am amused that you feel you have the moral standing to imply that I'm some sort of "Playboy philosopher."

I invite you to come to Rio and go to the brothels with me and my partner. You might learn a thing or two from the sex working women here in Brazil, presuming you'd listen to them.

Aaron Lakoff replies: Martin Dufresne's comments seem to have completely missed the point of my original article. To return to my central argument, it wasn't that anarchists haven't advocated the abolition of prostitution. Indeed, some of them have.

Rather, my contention was that sex-work abolitionism is not coherent with anarchism if we are to understand its main pillars as self-determination, autonomy, and combating all forms of oppression.

Arguments like Dufresne's play well into the hands of conservative patriarchy who would sooner silence sex workers than have them organize for their own self-determination and liberation.

Eventually, abolitionists are going to have to reckon with this fact, or they'll end up applauding Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government in completely criminalizing sex work.

As anarchists and feminists, we need to get on the right side of the class war and start supporting women on the frontlines.

Not Generalist Poetry

This being the 110th anniversary of the Industrial Workers of the World, I'd like to respond to the "Wobblies Without Work" article by Anu Bonobo in FE Fall 2005; a special issue on the Industrial Worker of the World centenary. The article's interpretation of the IWW took quite a feat of logic to arrive at.

It begins, "If there's any idea promoted by the Wobblies that needs revision, it's their concept of One Big Union." And, later, "The Wobbly spirit of revolution isn't really about owning the means of production and controlling them through a bureaucracy of councils and syndicates."

The Preamble of the IWW constitution in its third line declares, we "must organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system and live in harmony with the earth."

Far from being "generalist poetry,"

as Bonobo writes, the Preamble outlines the basic framework of such an organization that could challenge international capitalism, "formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department, thus making an injury to one an injury to all."

It should be noted that the Preamble posits unity by all producers (or distributors) of industry as the active force in re-organization into an equitable system. Noam Chomsky describes his view of a Libertarian Socialism exactly as "a system of workers councils, consumer councils, commune assemblies, regional assemblies," etc.

Whether it implies a strictly Industrial Union movement akin to the One Big Union or more of a syndicalist approach should be discovered in action, not theory.

The fight for the 4 hour day, with the motto "Less hours; more pay," reflects the demand for time to enjoy life, while providing a solution to unemployment and poverty. Contrary to Bonobo's opinion, we praise worker-owned collectives that build cooperation and eliminate wage labor. Eliminate the idle classes who do no work, but receive all the benefits. No Bosses! No Managers!

If we are to create a society that provides the basic needs of the population and moves away from a profit-based system, it would require the participation of a democratic economic organization of the working class. In this era of climate change and international trade, direct action and solidarity unionism is the most practical plan for our goal.

The IWW was, and is, such an organization that seeks to "Build the new world within the shell of the old."

Nacazqualtia Tecetliani
Detroit

On Polyamory

I don't get out of the woods much, so I am catching up on the last couple of issues and read the commentary on polyamory in the last couple of issues. (See "Polyamory and Power," by Andrew William Smith, Summer 2013 *Fifth*

Estate).

Anti-dyadic and non-dyadic coupling has a long and rich history, something the anthropological and biological record clearly indicates. Dyadic coupling is most definitely not the experience of humanity and certainly not the norm of the species.

The authority and merits of serial monogamy among the bourgeoisie are largely a fiction that imposes a quiet sort of self-deluded, pathetic and infantile existence on its adherents who generally are loath to admit it but force others to bear witness to the nonsense.

Most dyadic relationships are little more than a woven tissue of lies, a fetid swamp within which bodies live in quiet desperation until the libidinal energies are drained completely usually 5- 10 years into a relationship. Dyadic couples are generally really boring and lifeless or some retarded morality play.

Fortunately, monogamy is little more than a comforting illusion, the saving lie as we know the human animal, particularly the female, is more than willing to seek out covert sexual encounters, contrary to popular myth of the male being the promiscuous one.

Such is the secret life of women and this behavior may have deep roots in evolutionary biology, but more realistically, it is the untenability of the absurd notion that someone can be and should be fulfilled by only one other person: emotionally, sexually, and otherwise.

This pathetic narrative is central to every Hollywood production, shit rock song, and crap romance novel, and is a central feature of the dynamic of social control in North America where the cult of Individualism is its keystone.

The object being to keep the libidinal energies of the vast majority of human beings contained in as small and dysfunctional social network as possible, channeling the excess into the complex of power we call the Machine; mass warfare, consumption, etc.

There are many examples of human societies whose sexual relations are not caged by the fear and neurotic manifestations of the psychosocial dynamic of bourgeois ideology and these societies tend toward egalitarian and non-violent social relations.

The Mosou, Canela, Bar, Ach, the meat-for-sex tribes in South America, as well as those communities who celebrate the "three days that God does not have eyes," the Toda and Omaha, the Latter Day Saints cult, old hippie communes in northern California.

There were a string of North American communes in the 19th century that practiced group marriage such as Oneida in New York state. Then, there is the reality of wide-spread consensual and non-consensual infidelity in Western and non-Western societies. Swinging is also a popular sub-culture, a phenomena that emphasizes and celebrates female control over her multi-partner sexual experience devoid of Victorian romanticism, morality, and its patriarchal framework of fear and control.

In many ways, such phenomena are similar to festivals where a Canela woman of Brazil can enjoy as many partners of her choice and with the overt support and approval of her husband.

Societies that impose monogamy as the only sanctioned type of relationship always have unwritten rules for negotiating sex outside of the dyad and very often it is tacitly encouraged and seen as socially beneficial.

Having known innumerable married female lovers who pursue sex outside of their stable, often dreary monogamous relationship with their "steady eddy," with or without their partner's approval, testifies to the fact that, often, we have to live in two worlds to make this one tolerable.

One is necessary to the stability of the other. Highly repressed libidinal energies are indicative of hierarchical methods of social control and destructive to the health of the human organism.

Ivo
Williams, Ore.

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